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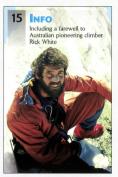
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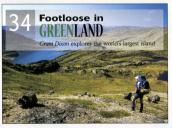
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A new era

Another change of guard at the Wild fort

AFIE 96 ISSUIS OF WILL JAND 92 EDTIONALS, a different voice from the Editor's chair is unexpected. Over the last 24 years Chris Baster has overseen thousands of articles, hundreds of contributors and the production of days of reading material. Some of you may know that Chris has been ill for the last few months, he has now stopped work to concentrate on his health and we all wish him a sweetly recovery.

However, even without his presence in the office he still has a strong influence on the magazine; Chris is a founder, a Director and remains involved in the running of Wild. But it goes much deeper than this. The ethos of the magazine is unchanged from that outlined in the first issue by a hotheaded, 30-something Chris. Wild's still a celebration of wild places; environmental conservation of wild places; environmental conservation remains a key focus; we are proudly independent; and our integrity is crucial to both the magazine and the business. This will not change, now or in the future. Your magazine is in safe hands:

Similar indices.

Stephen Hamilton has worked at Wild Publications for around ten years, beginning in 1988 as the Advertising Manager. He left in 1995 but returned seven years later, becoming Advertising and Marketing Director and, with Chris, co-owner of Wild Publications. During the last two years he has learned all facets of the business and has now taken over the day-to-day running of the magazine. It is a challenge that he relishes and has taken in his stride.

I am excited about my new position as Editor and look forward to pouring my enthusiasm, ideas and vitality into the role. My knowledge of the magazine and love of the outdoors equip me well for the job. At the beginning of 2003 I was hired as Administration and Editorial Assistant at Wild. I quickly fought my way from the deep, dark administrative jungle to the Associate Editor position, which I held for almost two years. The content of the magazine, the compiling of the departments, production of the surveys, editing, map drawing and administration—all

these were my responsibilities, overseen by Chris's watchful eye. I've learnt how the magazine works and what makes it work; Chris is an excellent and thorough teacher. When he became ill assumed other responsibilities and Wild no 95 was produced with little input from Chris. I hope you agree that it was an excellent issue.

I can't pretend to the 'crusty, seasoned editor' status of my predecessor-when the first Wild was published I couldn't even readbut I've been an 'outdoors type' for a long time now. After a few years spent in the highrise wilds of Bangkok, my brave parents took us on family camping holidays around the 'bush capital' and further afield to reintroduce us to the Australian bush. I've been playing in it ever since, mostly bushwalking, climbing and skiing. While at school I spent weeks and weekends exploring the Victorian Alps and the Canberra region, and by the time I was 21 I'd done some full-on walks both in Australia and overseas, was climbing regularly and had put myself through the torture of mountaineering in New Zealand with boots a size too small. Many other outdoors adventures within Australia and overseas have followed.

During the past decade I've had a variety of disparte jobs; it's only when I began at Wild Publications that I realised how well they equipped me for my position at the magazine. After school the almost obligatory four of dury' of the UK lasted a couple of years as I worked my way around various outdoors centres in the Lake District and Scotland. Back home, an outdoors shop hired me land gave me plenty of time off to explore' while I put myself through a writing and editing degree at university. Other bots in PK, editing and graphics followed before I became 'girl Friday' at Wild. More than two years later, here I am.

We're very excited about the future of the magazine; during the last few years it seems that each issue has been better than the last. We've put a lot of work into the appearance of Wild, resulting in a magazine that looks fresh, modern and has received much positive feedback. The excellent content has been due to a great range of material from our contributors, good follow-up on ideas and increased emphasis on the departments. We look forward to continuing this neverending job of improvement, using the youth, energy and experience of the Wild team.

This magazine has very solid foundations, amazing supporters and a strong direction—we shall continue to build on these while harressing the vitality and enthusiasm that accompanies change. Chris has pointed out that my appointment is not only a change of guard but a generational and gender transition as well; the magazine will no doubt be different in subtle ways. However, our focus and our aim remain the same, as spel out in our logo. Wild is Australia's wildemess adventure magazine. That will never change.

Another key area in which the magazine has never faltered is its responsibility towards, and dependence on, our readers, contributors and advertisers. In the Editorial in the first issue of Wild Chris wrote:

I Wild... has been made possible by the response of our contributors on one hand and our subscribers and advertisers on the other. The enthusiasm of both has been widespread and substantial. Its continuance will be vital to the magazine's future.

This is as true today, a year away from our 100th issue, as it was then. We look forward to the issues ahead and your continued support. Let us know how we're doing.

Megan Holbeck

a magazine

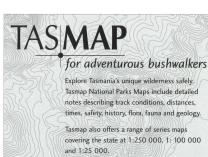
Editor



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Advertising rates are available on request. Copy deadlines (advertising and editorial): 8 October (summer issue), 15 January (autumn), 15 April (winter), 15 July (spring). See below for publication dates.

Contributions, preferably well illustrated with slides, are welcome. Contributors' Cuidelines are available at www.wild.com.au Written submissions should be supplied by

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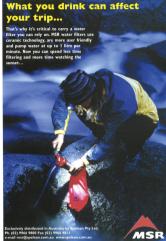
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ne island State?

Hit them in the hip pocket

HAVING HIST REREAD YOUR LATEST EDITORIAL (Wild no 95) and being disillusioned by the current election result. I would like to share my idea to combat the destruction of oldgrowth forest in Tasmania. During the election both the mainland and island governments harped on about saving jobs and this is the Achilles' heel whereby we defeat the foe. Unfortunately, it means hardship for both the Tasmanian people and those who love to visit and walk in Tas-

Yes, you guessed it—my family is boycotting Tasmania until oldgrowth forests are taken off the menu of Japanese and world consumption. It worked against South Africa and we'll soon see what happens if people refuse to visit Tassie. The Tasmanian Government will struggle to justify, say, 5000 forestry jobs against 100 000 plus iobs in the tourist industry!

Noticed yesterday that the ferries are down-sizing so maybe the ground swell has started already?

Don Noble Melbourne, Vic

Great minds, fools and ultra-lightweight

What is it. I wonder, that makes many people, unconnected in any understood way, come up with the same idea? Great minds, perhaps, thinking alike?

It was about a year ago that I first started wondering why I was regularly hefting a twenty kilogram, eighty litre pack on fouror five-day trips. The rucksack alone, empty, weighed three-and-a-half kilograms.

I went off into the Victorian Alps a couple of weeks ago and my pack this time weighed twelve kilograms including food for five days. Instead of an eighty litre rucksack, mine was rated at 30 litres. Admittedly, I had to sling a few things on the outside of the pack but this was, after all, a bit of an experiment on my part...

I am expecting to reduce my load to around seven kilos within a few trips, not counting food. I will have replaced almost all my walking equipment by then, at a cost roughly equivalent to taking my family to a good restaurant three times. And, looked after, the new equipment should last at least ten years. I'll be seventy-one by then and looking for even lighter gear I expect. And by the way, Roger Caffin, my mother

used to say it was fools who seldom differed, rather than great minds.

Michel Dignand

Wagga Wagga, NSW

I had just finished erecting my tent when John reappeared... I noticed his pack had a large tear and the main strap on his sandal was broken...he had had a 'slight fall' in the scree on Rabbit Pass. He was lucky, very lucky. With the aid of my GPS we soon found the bivvy about 15 minutes away. John set up his camp under a rock (bivvy) with a piece of six by four tarp.

I eventually reached Wanaka and obviously John had also made it back. Department of Conservation advised that it had been snowing in the

area for the last two days, with freezing levels dropping to 1200 metres John had reached the limit of his resources and

had any other eventuality occurred he would have become a statistic.

Specialised kit is for specialised applications. I suggest that some of the advertising and techno blab for this lightweight kit is irresponsible. Inexperienced users...see the kit displayed in alpine conditions and assume it is suitable for the same.

Peter Vella Eumundi, Old

If I may be so bold as to step up in defence of Roger Caffin and in reply to Sean Wood's letter, 'A little Australian light on the subject' (Wildfire Wild no 95). Sean mentions a number of

manufacturers whose gear is available in Australian retailers' stores whilst bagging Roger for promoting the importing of gear. Well, Sean, actually GoLite and MSR are US companies and the items available at the Australian retailers are wait for it imported! Wilderness Equipment manufactures its gear overseas and at least in respect of tents and packs, would not be considered lightweight.

Roger was referring to manufacturers of Australian lightweight gear who are far and few between and even the one or two products available from Australian manufacturers are generally not in the league of the lightweight/ultra-lightweight overseas manufacturers. Maybe Sean should do some real research on that despised Internet first!

Andrew Priest Perth. WA



'Ultra-lightweight Walking' by Roger Caffin in Wild no 94 is a very well-balanced article. The gear used is well explained and, more importantly, claims are not exaggerated. Roger has clearly emphasised that the equipment used is for two-season use. The following will demonstrate what can hap-

In February 2004 I was having lunch on Rabbit Pass in New Zealand and decided to retreat back to Ruth Flats because of deteriorating weather. Emerging from the swirling cloud was a walker swanning along at a good rate of knots. I noticed his sandals and my first words were, 'Hi, you are brave climbing up Wilkin Face in sandals'... I also noticed that his pack was an ultra-light make. John mentioned the incoming weather and carried on. I finished my lunch and...retreated back to Ruth Flats



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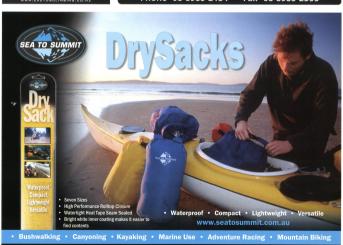
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Alert and alarmed

Wildfire in Wild no 95 included a letter from Rod Costigan of Adventure Victoria outlining some concerns about a Victorian government project, the Adventure Activity Standards.

If recent history here in Victoria is any guide, criticism of the AAS or the suggestion that the AAS are ill-conceived will provoke a response that includes references to ethics, accountability and duty of care...For good measure, defence of the AAS usually includes chilling reference to the sustainability of the industry.

Apart from some alarming specific requirements in the bushwalking AAS hat Rod outlined, much of the AAS are vague. There is a reason for such vague content, of course it is just not possible to reduce an adventure activity conducted in the natural environment, sepecially bushwalking...to a list. It is a flawed assumption behind the AAS that the sorts of skills and knowledge required for the safe conduct of a bush activity can be listed definitively in a few passes.

It is not a lapse that the AAS are vague on important things and insistent on the trivial or excessive...It is an inevitable outcome of a process that badly misunderstands the nature of safety in the bush.

The claims that the AAS describe the safe conduct of an activity, define the standard for the duty of care of a leader, and will assist organisations in obtaining insurance protection are both fanciful and alaming. The recent improvements in insurance availability result from specific changes to legislation in each State not Victoria's AAS.

But now the AAS exist, they may well be used in determining a duty of care question, or an insurance claim. Then the AAS are just as likely to work against, rather than for, a leader or organisation...

The AAS may now going interstate, apparently in blind acceptance of the flawed assumptions behind the AAS and the assertions made about their benefits. Wild readers interstate, be alert and alarmed.

Duncan Brookes Essendon, Vic

The unrepentant gardener

It was disappointing to read vitriolic comments from Jay Reilly (Wildfire, Wild no 94) who condemned the role of National Parks staff who work to protect National Parks from inappropriate usage.

Rangers do not discourage visitors; they do provide track notes and verbal advice concerning remote area bushwalking but they avoid promoting a remote destination...

If National Park rangers do not attempt to control usage, the occasional unpleasant visitor who...degrades a site will lower the value of the experience for subsequent visitors for years to come. Knowing that there are rules of decency and common sense to be observed in a National Park—and that such rules can be enforced—helps to control ill-usage...

Advertising a walk or a destination is certain to increase usage...The wet tropics of

north Queensland is a high rainfall area. Remote bushwalking destinations receive up to four metres of rain in a good year. Vegetation growth and recovery on exposed, naturally leached sites is very slow.

Jay Reilly may have thought to denigrate rangers by describing them as glorified gardeners. If a gardener is one who actively cares for plants and the garden habitat they create, glorified gardeners have no reason to be shy of their vocation.

Rupert Russell Retired ranger, unrepentant gardener Mt Molloy, Qld

Bush predecessors

It was refreshing to see the article in Wild no 95 on Aborginal rock and discoveries, a timely reminder that the areas we like to think of as untouched 'wilderness' were in fact home to Aborginal people for tens of thousands of years. Over the millennia, they devised a way of life that, while caring for the country, also modified it in order to enable their own survival.

As I go bushwalking with my food and shelter conveniently (if heavily) stashed away in my pack, I think from time to time of the people who were able to live so richly in what may seem to us a very harsh environment.

A fellow walker once directed me to a sandstone cave above a rugged tributary of the Colo River in Wollemi National Park where over thirty hand stencils, including those of young children, decorated the walls. With its peaceful outlook and golden roof curving protectively over the sandy floor, it was a magic spot. It is both saddening and humbling to come face to face with such direct evidence of our predecessors in the bush.

Meg McKone

Holt, ACT

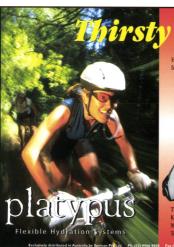
Less than perfect balance

I find the criticism of trekking poles unfair. They may not be ideal in some conditions but for many people they make the outdoors accessible. For those with vision impairment they aid in depth perception and feedback. For those with knee pain, trekking poles take a lot of strain off the knee on downhills. For those whose balance is less than perfect they may save a fall, a sprained ankle, or worst.

Trekking poles may be a waste for the fit 20 somethings, but for those older walkers with slight disabilities they are a device to help you get from A to B safely. I see the damage caused by poles as trivial in a world of logging and bulldozers. Isn't the track a sear anyway?

Paul Sillato Burnie, Tas

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au



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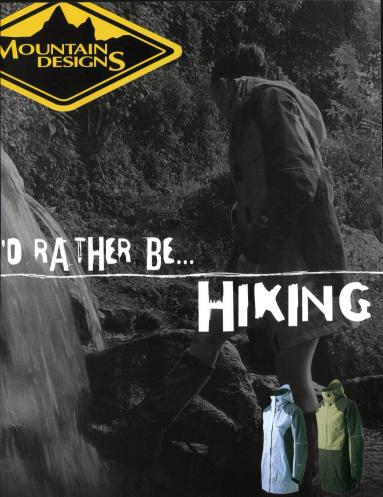
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- * 20 second alarm sound at alarm time
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- I/100-second-resolution chronograph with
- 24-hour working range
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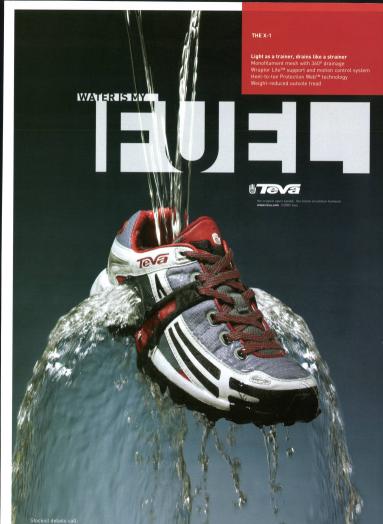
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RICK WHITE

Michael Meadows farewells one of the pioneering heroes of Australian climbing and the outdoors industry

The death of pioneering Queensland climber Rick White in November 2004 marks the end of an era for 'adventure' climbing in Australia.

He joined the fledgling Brisbane Rockclimbing Club in the late 1960s after moving to Queensland from South Australia and had soon repeated the hardest routes in the region. He found himself at the forefront of a new wave of climbing activity that pushed Queensland to the top of the sport in Australia.

White and his early climbing partner Chris Meadows made an historic discovery on 9 November 1968 when they found the cliff now known as Frog Buttress. Today there are around 400 differ-

ent climbs at the internationally acclaimed crag. In 1972 White joined with local climbers Ted Cais and Ron Collett to put up what was then the hardest route in Australia, Valhalla (22) on the East Face of Mt Maroon in south-east Queensland. The following year he became the first Australian to climb The Nose, a 900 metre route on El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, teaming up with British mountaineer Doug Scott. In the same season in Yosemite, he was the first Aussie to climb the celebrated Salathé Wall. Following an unsuccessful attempt to climb FitzRoy in Patagonia early in 1974, he founded the outdoors equipment company Mountain Designs.

In 1979 White made a solo ascent of the 562 metre Balls Pyramid near Lord Howe Island. Two years later, he joined Scott and others to establish a new route up the 6500 metre East Ridge of Shivling in the Garwhal Himalaya. He celebrated his 33rd birthday on the climb, surviving a 250 metre fall with Australiam mountaineer Greg Child on the descent. The 13-day route they climbed was the hardest ever done at altitude at that time and remained unrepeated for 15 years.

White and his second wife Jane organised two Himalayan expeditions—to Cho Oyu in 1990 and to Mt Everest the following year—when fate intervened: the collapse of a longtime financier for Mountain Designs meant he lost control of his business, incurring large debts.

It was at this time he was diagnosed with the incurable musclewasting disease, inclusion body myositis—it meant an end to his career as a climber. Ironically, it was the same year in which his early climbing partner Chris Meadows took his own life. Undeterred, White moved on, starting up a new business. In 2001—almost 30 years after he had started Mountain Designs—he was invited to rejoin the company as research and development adviser.

In recent years he channelled his passion into coaching a group of local junior climbers, travelling hundreds of kilometres—usually at his own expense—to deliver his charges to-local, national and, more recently, international climbing competitions.

Rick White began in the days when hard climbing required an adventurous and often visionary spirit, and he stubbornly maintained a clean-climbing ethic until his death from cancer. To the very end his attitude was typical of the extraordinary optimism and drive that was the hallmark of his life as one of Australia's leading nestwar climbing identities.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS Large areas reopening in Kosciuszko

National Park

Large areas of Kosciuszko National Park in New South Wales that have been closed since the fires in summer 2003 have been reopened to bushwalkers. According to the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, the post-fire recovery across the park has been variable. Some areas at higher allitude including The Rolling Grounds, Watsons Crags, Hannels Spur and Mt Jagungal will remain closed for rehabilitation, but many other areas are now accessible. The NPWS has asked that wherever possible people walking in the newly opened areas avoid previously burnt ground, stepers Jopes and recovering bogs. Visit www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au for further details and a map showing park closures.

Great Australian Bushwalk

Andrew Cox reports on the first annual event

The first national Great Australian Bushwalk was held in October 2004, with more than 3000 people participating in the free event. Bushwalks were held in each State and Territory of Australia on the same day, with more than 70 different walls, in total. The largest bushwalk was in the Australian Capital Territory where 540 people participated in two walks organised by the National Parks Association and Environment ACT. NSW Premier and event patron Bob Carr, ACT Chief Minister John Stanhope, and SA Premier Mike Rann all joined the bushwalks. The walk was first held as a NSW-wide event of 20 walks in September 2003 and will be held again in mid-spring 2005.



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Wild Diary listings provide information about rucksack-sports events and instruction courses run by non-commercial organisations. Send items for publication to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181. Email editorial@wild.com.au

March				21	ICC NSW Winter Marathon NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au Series Race 3 C			August			
	Autumn 6 hr R Roving 6/15 hr R	WA Vic	www.wa.rogaine.asn.au	21-22	Australian Rogaine Championships R	Qld	www.qldrogaine.asn.au	7	Northern Series Race 4 C	Qld	www.canoeqld.or
	CCCC Summer Series		//vra.kassell.org/vra.htm www.nswcanoe.org.au	28	ACT Mountain Running Championships BR	ACT	jgharding@bigpond.com	7	State School-age Championships R	Qld	www.qldrogaine.as
	Race 3 C	HOW	www.iiswcaiioe.org.au		Wildwater Rage 2 C	WA		7	3 hr R	Old	www.gldrogaine.as
	SCC Rod Fry Memorial	WA	www.wa.canoe.org.au	29	Jun		www.wa.canoe.org.au	13	CCCC NSW Winter Marathi Series Rage 6 C	in NSW	www.nswcanoe.or
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CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS

The 'unnamed knoll' referred to on page 36 of The Southern Main Range' article in Wild no 94 was officially named Cuthbetton Peaks four years ago, It was named after the late Jim Cuthbertson, a well-known bushwalker in south-east Queensland. Mt Bartle Frere is the highest mountain in Queensland, not Mt Superbus as stated on page 34 of Wild no 95.

One Planet up in smoke

But rebuilding has begun

The One Planet factory in Melbourne caught fire on 21 November 2004, totally destroying the factory, stock, materials, patterns and machinery. Fortunately, the computer server was saved from the fire and the backup was kept off site, allowing the company to begin rebuilding almost immediately. The fire was caused by an electrical fault. One Planet is among the few outdoors equipment companies that still manufacture in Australia and has vowed to continue to do so. Most staff took leave and will return to their positions as soon as possible. The new range is expected to be available from May 2005.



The 2004 Murray Marathon finished in hot conditions on New Year's Eve, with around 1000 people competing in the many categories of the 404 kilometre, five-day race. Australian Canoeing reports that the weather was changeable during the event, ranging from chilly mornings and gusty winds to temperatures in the high 30s on the last day when approaching Swan Hill, Victoria. The ACT's Simon Stembuse won the overall handicapped champion title after taking line honours on each day of the race. The Mercantile Kayak Club

from Victoria were overall winners in the K1 event, with runners-up Wyndham Redlands Canoe Club B from NSW.

The Age reported on 14 January that the Environment Protection Authority is investigating pollution levels in Melbourne's Yarra River after recent revelations that three men have suffered lung haemorrhaging, delusions and kidney failure after kayaking in the urban waterway over the last three years. Two of these men contracted leptospirosis—an illness caused by coming into contact with the urine of And they're off! The school and juniors relay teams start the Murray Marathon. Liam Lynch

infected animals—after they accidentally swallowed water while kayaking. Rowers also found around 60 dead eels floating between the Richmond Rail Bridge and Dights Falls in January. The Victorian Government wants to make the Yarra River safe for swimming by 2008.

CAVE RAVE

Stephen Bunton with an update on the underground world

On 19 November 2004 an earthquake measuring 4.7 on the Richter scale hir Tasmania, its epicentre just south of Mole Creek. A guided parry was in one of the local caves at the time and reported that it seemed as though the cave was about to flood. This quake was slightly larger than that which hit the area in 1997. No damage to the caves was reported after either earthquake.

In January, 50-year-old Australian Dave Shaw died in Bosensnapag (Bushman's Cawe) in South Africa, the world's third deepest in South Africa, the world's third deepest freshwater caw, the was a member of an eight-person team trying to recover the body of Deon Dreyer, a South African who died in 1994 while trying to establish the cawediving depth record. The recovery party had reached a depth of 280 metres when Shaw failed to make a prearranged rendezvous at —220 metres. Both bodies later floated to near the surface and were recovered.

In January Alan Warild was presented the Edie Smith Award, the highest recognition possible for an Australian caver. (See profile of Alan Warild in Wild no 52.) He received the award at CaveMania, the 25th Biennial Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation held at Dover, Tasmania, in recognition of his explorations in the world's deepest caves. Warild was the keynote speaker for the conference, opened by the Governor of Tasmania, William Cox. At the conference it was also announced that Australia's longest cave, Bullita Cave in Gregory National Park, Northern Territory, is now known to be more than 100 kilometres in length; and that the world's deepest cave Voronia Cave in Abkahzia, is now claimed to be 2080 metres deep, making it the world's first cave of more than two kilometres in depth.

Alan Warild in a cave in Spain, October 2004. Enrique Ogando

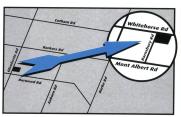




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Adventure Activity

Standards to go national? Rod Costigan from Adventure Victoria reports that there have been further developments in the Victorian Government's attempt to introduce Adventure Activity Standards in the State. The AAS attempt to define the prudential measures that bush travellers should follow and the documents are expected to be used in legal proceedings. (For further information, see Wildfire, page 11 and Wild no 95, pages 9 and 21.) AV has recently seen a QC's opinion that an organisation that endorses such a document will increase the exposure of its members to litigation. The opinion also noted that it could encourage the false supposition that the community at large shares the same obligations under current law as professionals do when they go out in the bush. A committee of State governments on recreation and sport intends to recommend that the Victorian model be replicated by other State governments.

Four Peaks race

This annual event took place on the Melbourne Cup weekend last year, with hundreds of people taking part in the challenging runs up Mystic Hill (11 kilometres), Mt Feathertop (12 kilometres), Mt Hotham (15 kilometres) and Mt Buffalo (10.5 kilometres) over the four-day event. David Osmond from the ACT won the men's title for the second time, in a total of four hours and 44 minutes, while Vanessa Harvard from NSW finished in five hours and 55 minutes. Further results and details about this hard-core event can be found at http://brightalpineclimb. netc.net.au

Grampians grunt

Bob Langham reports that he recently completed a traverse of the Serra Range in Victoria's Grampians, taking ten days to complete the walk. He was spurred to action after reading in Wild that it was believed a full traverse of the range from Mt Rosea to Mt Sturgeon had never been done. Langham walked solo for the last seven days after his companion suffered blisters and knee pain. He encountered dense scrub, sleet and heat on the trip, and had a nasty encounter with a dislodged rock. He was glad to finish the trip and, according to 'the missus', he really did pong!

Readers' contributions to this department, including high-resolution digital photos or colour sides, are welcome. Items of less than 200 waste are more likely to be published. Send them to Wide, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wide com au.



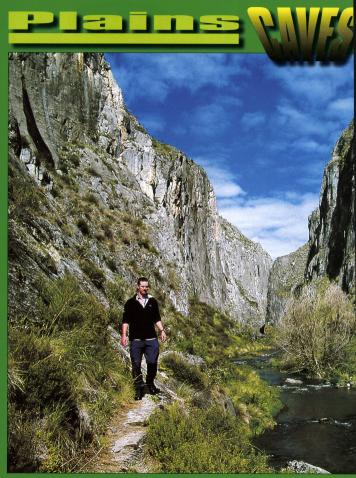




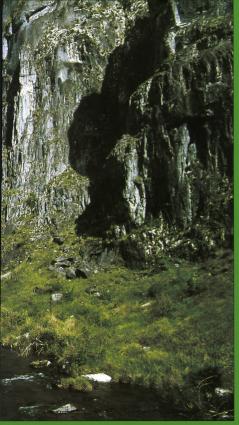


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and Awfully BlG HILLS



Andrew Bain follows Kosciuszko's limestone landscape to the Australian Capital Territory's highest peaks

On the Cooleman Plain, far from its namesake peak. Kosciuszko National Park is almost unrecognisable. Tucked into the is almost unrecognisable. Iucked into the park's north-eastern comer, the Cooleman is an alpine anomaly, a karst land where limestone gorges, caves and the magic tricks of Cave Creek are more striking than the mountains. It's a place described by John Siseman in his guidebook to the 683 kilometre Australian Alpy Walking Track as 'perhaps the most unexpected feature along the entire Track. The Cooleman Plain is pinched be-tween the hinbest mountains of New

tween the highest mountains of New South Wales and the highest mountains of the ACT though proximity to the Main Range and Mt Jagungal has made the latter peaks afterthoughts. Yet from the latter peaks atterthoughts. Yet from the open sweep of the Cooleman Plain, it's Bimberi Peak (1911 metres) and Mt Murray (1845 metres)—the ACT's two highest mountains, straddling the NSW/ACT border—that loom the largest, beckoning keen walkers across the plain and bev

ond.
I began my walk to the two mountains at the Cooleman Mountain camp-site,

at the Cooleman Mountain camp-site, at the Cooleman Mountains at the Cooleman Mountain camp-site, the cooleman Mountain camp-site, the cooleman Mountain camp-site, the cooleman Mountain Cooleman Plain, the home-stead takes it name from an Aboriginal word for the area: Cooleman Plain, the Mountain Cooleman Mountain Cooleman Plain, the Mountain Cooleman Mountain Cooleman Plain, the Mountain Cooleman Mountain Cooleman Plain, the Mountain Cooleman Plain Cooleman Plain, the Mountain Cooleman Plain Cooleman homestead site in 1839. In the 1880s it became an outstation of Yarralumla Station and the current buildings, now listed by the National Trust and National Estate, were constructed. Four structures

Andrew Bain in Clarke Gorae, 'the show-piece of the Cooleman Plain'. All photos by the author

remain including a cheese hut—the oldest interlocking log cabin in Kosciuszko National

Beyond Coolamine, with the fire track now free of traffic, I dropped again towards the plain, emerging to a glimpse of Clarke Gorge ahead. A great gash in the tussocky earth, this gorge is the show-piece of the Cooleman Plain, its grey limestone walls sliced neatly by Cave Creek.

The fire track continues almost to the mouth of the gorge but the most interesting approach is far more circuitous. Stepping out across faint wheel tracks I left the road, heading across a plain that looks more like a sweetly rolling English landscape than a harsh alpine environment.

Green posts were reliable guides through a scribble of tracks, past sink-holes and tiny waterways that disappeared into the porous limestone earth as quickly as they appeared. At Cave Creek the makeshift path turned briefly upstream, crossing the creek before looping once more across the plain and returning to Cave Creek in a slippery descent at the edge of Murray Cave.

One of Cave Creek's most interesting features, Murray Cave is a former spring entrance running 200 metres into the earth to a siphon pool. In extreme drought the siphon pool runs dry fit dried only three times last century), opening the cave another 300 metres.

It was far from a drought when I entered the cave's keyhole opening, taking a sharp left turn inside and splashing my way towards the siphon pool. My wet feet told their own story: a month of heavy spring rain meant that little on the Cooleman Plain was as expected.

Cave Creek is normally no more than a stony bed at this point: a series of springs pour to the surface a short way downstream at Blue Waterholes and Cave Creek truly begins. But as I continued along the creek through smaller Nicole Gorge, I was forced to ford and re-ford the creek, the water rising to above my knees. Past Cooleman Cave and Right Cooleman Cave, the two joined by a narrow passage, I squelched through snow grass tussocks and the start of a blackberry infestation into my first night's camp ar Blue Waterholes

Blue Waterholes is usually Cave Creek's rabbit-out-of-a-hat trick. The parched creek-bed suddenly bursts to watery life, streaming from beneath a small spur. But the deluge had skewed things again. Blue Waterholes



Route ----- Cliff Camp-site
Not

The Cooleman Plain

Not for navigation

ran a tannin-like brown, instead of the blue of its name, and the water merged into the flowing creek rather than creating it. Camped on its banks, looking across the water to cliffs, the scene seemed more like Victoria's Werribee Gorge than Kosciuszko National Park

In the cold of the next morning I slid my feet back into wet boots and took up where I'd finished off the previous night. Nicole Gorge had been little more than an appetiser What the gorge had in depth it lacked in length—within minutes! popped out of its eastern end. Moments later it was as if there had never been a gorge; the earth flattened and the walk returned to a familiar pattern of crossing and recrossing the deepening creek. Laid bare by fire, Cave Creek turned to rapids as it shuttled through a mess of boulders.

The creek poked through another gorge before slipping away over a pair of waterfalls and on to the Goodradigbee River. At the

waterfalls, about an hour from Blue Waterholes, I turned back. Gathering my pack, I cut

Gathering my pack, I cut again through the tight, boot-filling meanders of Cave Creek and was away, winding first through a wide gully where the flies were as prolific as the alpine

My sudden appearance set in motion a mob of the horses, one standing as twitchy sentry while the others galloped across my path and on to a far corner of the plain. It was a scene I'd repeat four or five times over the coming days, scattering brumbies on my outward and return journeys.

As the track dipped into Doosey Gully, turning towards the plain's finger-like extension into Seventeen Flat, it met a path coming from the right and joined with the Australian Alps Walking Track. One of the country's finest long distance tracks would now be my quiding line into Murray Gap.

Between limestone outcrops and through fences erected by early farmers who saw the cleared plain as their job partly done, the path clung to the northern edge of Seventeen Flat. My twin goals, Bimberi Peak and Mt

Murray, now stood directly ahead, the midday sun glistening off the patchy summit of Rimberi, Almost 24 hours after first setting foot on the Cooleman Plain I finally left it, rising over a spur from Howells Peak only to drop on to another plain: the smaller Pocket Saddle. Faint tracks ran away north and following them for five minutes I came to modernlooking Pocket Hut, painted the colour of a berry and its logbook filled with mentions of brumbies and wild

logs.

Pocket Saddle was set inside a saucer of mountains with Bimberi Peak the most prominent—a shining star drawing me east. At the saddle's end, the path turned into the Murray Gap Fire Track. Though I was in Aus-

Tucked into the park's north-eastern corner, the Cooleman is an alpine anomaly, a karst land where limestone gorges, caves and the magic tricks of Cave Creek are more striking than the mountains.

Above, approaching Oldfields Hut, Bimberi Peak behind. **Right**, brumbies racing across the Cooleman Plain.

for the deeper, more impressive Clarke Gorge. The route to Bimberi Peak and Mt Murray steered away from the gorge—but still it beckoned. The mountains could wait.

Metres downstream from camp I splashed back across Cave Creek, then crossed over low bluffs into the high, grey line of the gorge. Inside, the creek lapped over the path and I splashed on, ushered through the limestone slot by swallows.

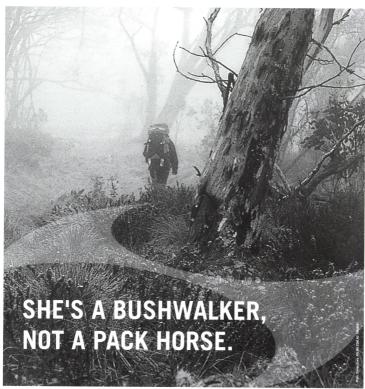
wild flowers. The rusted roof of the ruined Spencers Hut was barely visible off to the right, sitting incongruously at the edge of an enchanted forest of snow gums.

Out of the snow gums, I emerged again on to the Cooleman Plain, a place already busy with its own life: kangaroos grazed, rabbits scampered from the path and sulphurcrested cockatoos pulled at the grasses. But mostly the plain belonged to brumbies.

tralia's highest National Park it was only now, well into my second day, that I began my first real climb. Ascending I negotiated a fine, uncomfortable line between breathing heavily and not swallowing the hundreds of flies that had chosen to accompany me up the 14th and 15th process of the second part of the second

One more small plain separated me from the final haul into Murray Gap. On this plain sat Oldfields Hut like a bush manger. Ap-





AND WE GUESS YOU ARE TOO.

Holbrook Jackson, the famous English writer from early last century, once wrote, "Genius is initiative on fire!". Now Holbrook may not have realised it at the time, nor may he have been an active outdoor pursuitist, but he stated the philosophy that now marks the path for KOVEA, the world's leading manufacturer of compact, tough and reliable gas appliances. You see, KOVEA appreciates what it is to be a bushwalker, paddler, cycle or ski tourer. That's why their range of compact stoves and lanterns are perfectly designed for your next adventure

Enjoy what you do. Don't be a pack horse



KOVEA Camp-4 Ho

proached from this direction it looked little more than an abandoned shed in a stand of black sallies. But from the front it was a classic piece of High Country architecture with roughly hewn slats for walls and a veranda supported by logs. Imagine Craig's Hut with authenticity.

Bill Oldfield had an 8800-acre lease in the National Park until 1948 and built the three-room but in 1925. It had a grandstand view of Bimberi Peak and Mt Murray, their forested slopes climbing out of the Goodradigbee River ahead. Their shape from here was described by Klaus Hueneke in Huts of the High Country as 'like giant breasts with deflated nipples'. I confess to seeing less remarkable shapes; mountains that looked like mountains

I entered the Bimberi Wilderness, which sprawled across the border and into the ACT's Namadgi National Park. An entry notice warned of unsigned paths, clearly oblivious to the large 'Murray Gap' sign standing proudly on the pass. The track grew fainter but it was a simple route into Murray Gap, a steady climb through regenerating forest and squelching across the edge of Dunns Flat

Murray Gap announced itself with frog song, its bips, beeps and blips rising from the water that had transformed the pass into a high-rise swimming-pool. Climbing to its shoulder, I searched amid the snow gums for dry land and pitched my tent.

My twin peaks-Bimberi Peak and Mt Murray-climbed directly out of Murray Gap but with the afternoon ageing I had time to ascend only one. Following the time-honoured vegetables-before-meat principle, I chose Mt Murray, leaving the highest and best peak until morning.

Though both mountains are trackless, they offer different experiences. Bimberi arcs out of the pass, rising to a broad summit ridge. On Mt Murray there is no ridge, the peak towering as conical as a volcano 300 metres straight out of the gap. A shorter climb, it is also the steeper, heading up through sparse forest until there is no more up to go.

After 30 minutes I reached the top, which was capped in granite, but I quickly discovered I'd come to the wrong summit

The grassy knoll a few hundred metres west stood higher by about 10 metres. I trudged across in true peak-bagger style

On the summit snow gums bent obedient to the prevailing winds, fortunately absent this evening. The entire floor plan of my walk was revealed, the hills carpeted to within metres of the summit and the bare floor of the Cooleman Plain and Pocket Saddle stretching away west. More strikingly bare was the Curango Plain, south of Cooleman, its waterways glistening like tin and widening into Tantangara Reservoir. On the distant horizon was the streaked skyline of the Snowy Mountains-Kosciuszko National Park as I had previously known it-while behind and so near. Canberra was blocked from view by the surprisingly impressive peaks of Namadgi

I turned back from the mountain beneath a cloudless sky that had no plans to stay that way. Through the night it rained heavily and by morning it seemed clear that I'd miscalculated-I'd had my vegetables but might be robbed of my meat. Cloud rested wearily on Murray Gap and somewhere inside was Bimberi Peak, whited out like a misspelled word

Murphy's Law of bushwalking. I counted one cloud in the sky as I approached the hut: it had disappeared by the time I left.

From Oldfields Hut. I was to retrace my stens to Doosey Gully, almost elbowing my way through brumbies once again. At the edge of Pocket Saddle, half a dozen horses stepped out of the bush just as I was about to step back in. At their head was a heautiful white brumby still fitted with a bridle. Entering the trees, I was torn between admiring the horses and watching out for the magpies that were having a belated spring.

On the Cooleman Plain, Bimberi Peak and Mt Murray grew as faint as memories.



Camp-site amonast the snow gums at Murray Gap.

who spends too much time wandering when he should be working. He is the author of Headwin a book about a 20 000 kilometre cycling

journey around

Rain



Optimistically. I began to ascend the mountain, imagining one foot in Kosciuszko National Park and the other in Namadgi as I headed blindly up the slope as straight as practical until my legs sensed the flatness of the summit ridge. The beauty here didn't come from the view but from the closeness of the snow gums, their glistening trunks pressed into a mould of mist and providing the single bright-

Reaching the summit, I looked across the world and saw the inside of a cloud. At least I had the previous night's view still imprinted in my mind-the plains, the Snowiesand I imagined, in vain, that I saw it all again. I didn't linger; what would have been the point?

ness in a dark morning.

The return route from Murray Gap was like a different world: the sun from the day before had become fog and the track was now a river of the night's rain streaming off the pass. But by Oldfields Hut, one hour away, the day had burst into brillianceand at Doosev Gully I turned from my approach route and briefly followed the AAWT. I soon left it to head towards the rusted roof of Bill Jones Hut, a small, corrugated-iron box that remained somehow homely.

The course of the walk was now elementary: follow along the tree line until arriving back at the base of the hill from where I had started. But the walk's pleasures weren't over

From the hut I entered what felt like true karst country; the earth grew a limestone skin, its sink-holes working like drains. Though I could see the indent of nearby Cave Creek, still flush with water, the plain itself felt more arid than alpine

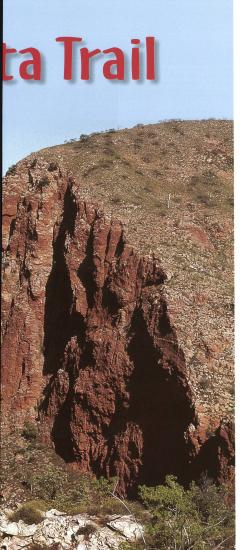
I descended to Harris Waterhole, a decentsized tarn that now seemed more like an oasis. From here, Mt Murray barely peeped over the horizon-Bimberi had disappeared some time before-and flies and ants quickly chased me on. The plain narrowed and I walked once more alongside Cave Creek. The sound of water, usually so rare on the Cooleman Plain, carried on the wind but for the first time in three days my boots were dry.

NORTHERN TERRITORY EXPLORATION

Not the Larapir

Two decades of exploring the Macdonnell Ranges, by Meg McKone





ONE BALMY, LATE WINTER'S DAY IN 1980 I stood beside a wizened callitris on the narrow summit ridge of an ancient mountain range. The view was extensive, the horizon distant, but what caught my attention lay almost at my feet-a huge amphitheatre hundreds of metres deep, buttressed by wild outcroppings of russet rock that leaped up from a canyon so narrow that the bleached boulders of its bed could only be seen in one or two places. Even the course of the creek was difficult to discern. It seemed to take a right-angled bend and then snake its way round a huge, red buttress before losing further height to empty out on to the plains beyond

It was my first trip to the Macdonnell Ranges, a spectacular series of more or less parallel ridges that stretch for hundreds of kilometres either side of Alice Springs, Leading the trip were Frank and Ioan Rigby, already veteran explorers of this remote area; indeed, Frank and Henry Gold had published a book. The Macdonnell Ranges, in 1973. However, the possibility of ever exploring the bottom of the gorge beneath us was far from anyone's mind. The slopes from the ridgetop were far too steep and loose to risk finding a route down, the canvon itself seemed to be edged with vertical cliffs and broken by internal drops, and attempting an entry from the plains would require finding a route over the range to the northern side.

Eleven years later we sat beneath the same native pine eating our lunch, intrigued to the point of seriously considering a trip to find a way into the remarkable gorge beneath us. Since it was unnamed on the map, we racked our brains for a suitable name until Frank Rigby, musing on its seemingly impregnable nature, came up with 'the Canvon of Defiance'. In 1992 we set out, determined to reach its inner depths.

The route over the main range by a relatively low saddle was quite easy. Once on the northern plains we turned west, wending our way across spinifex-clad spurs and into dry, rocky creek-beds, most of which were inconveniently at right angles to our line of travel. There were two questions in our minds: would we recognise our defiant canyon from the bottom end and, of greater practical importance, would it contain any drinkable water

We need not have feared on either count. Although we passed several interesting-looking gorges, ours stood out from the rest. A wooded valley curved gently through a fold in the lower spurs, flanked on either side by high, red cliffs. Further upstream the cliffs became even higher, ending in the summit ridge from where we had first seen the canyon all those years ago. We dropped our packs on the shingle beneath a tall river red gum and walked upstream to search for the all-important liquid. After only fifty metres there it was: three pools of clear water set in bedrock, one above the other, flowing (well, trickling) from the mouth of the can-

Pat Miethke high on the cliffs above Hugh Gorge. All photos by the author von. It's hard to describe the elation we felt at finding such a pure and plentiful supply, especially after the arid country we had been traversing all morning.

We continued upstream past more mosslined pools, pushing through bright gold, prickly wattle, pendant red-flowered, hollyleaved grevilleas and a host of other shrubs. A dry waterfall soon barred our way, offering two possibilities-an exposed scramble round one side or a chimney beside a large chockstone

We headed back downstream to set up camp as it was getting late. In the morning we witnessed one of the wonders of the Macdonnells-sunrise on the north-facing cliffs. At first light the ancient rocks take on an ethereal, salmon-pink glow that fades as the light strengthens. Then, just as you think it's all over, the sun comes bursting over the horizon and splashes the cliffs with brilliant

leaving us totally surrounded in red rock glowing with reflected light. Another, deeper pool seemed to bar our way but we were able to straddle it without a swim. At the far end was another chockstone with enough space behind to wriggle up rock smoothed by countless aeons of floods and soon we were at the end of the road-a circular bowl filled with rounded pebbles beneath a vertical drop of about six metres above which the canyon curved out of sight.

How I longed for a rockclimber with some grippy climbing shoes to scamper up and it Crisis Rock. But we couldn't get up the final climb behind the buttress: it was way bevond our league.

By now you've probably noticed that I haven't mentioned the exact location of these trips. Perhaps the most exciting, rewarding kind of bushwalking you can do is to explore an area for yourself and there aren't many places left where this is still possible.

Better than those bloody shitty little Blue Mountains canyons!' he exclaimed, although he did admit later that perhaps this was a little extreme.

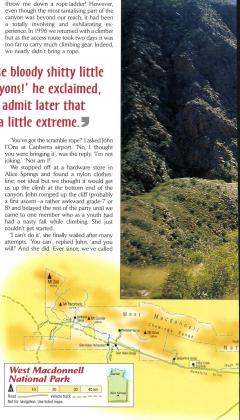
crimson-and you can lie snugly in your sleeping-bag while watching the whole fantastic show!

The next morning we were back up the gorge, ready to storm the waterfall one way or another. The chimney looked less scary so we tried it first; there wasn't a problem with the chimney but too much air between the top of the chock and the cliff. Next we tried the side route, easily ascending the first five metres. The next several metres, however, were too exposed to risk in our isolated situation. Perhaps if we had a rope and a rockclimber to belay us up.

We had two more options and two days left to find our way into the heart of the canyon. A study of the cliffs at the top of a steep slope on the western side revealed a gully cutting through them. This gave us access to a ridge alongside the canyon. We could see our callitris on the top of the range and the water-bleached rocks of the gorge below as it emerged from its journey around the huge, red buttress. However, the slope beneath us was far too steep and unstable to attempt.

Now we had only one day and one possibility left: an entry from the eastern side. Once again a gully gave us access through the cliffline to a spur from where a steep descent led into a side creek. Suddenly, almost too easily, we were there, above the unclimbed chockstone in the flat section of the gorge below the red buttress.

A hundred metres upstream the gorge narrowed dramatically as it took a sharp swing to the left, seeming to go into the bowels of the mountain in its loop around the buttress. We straddled a couple of small pools and the gorge swung to the right.

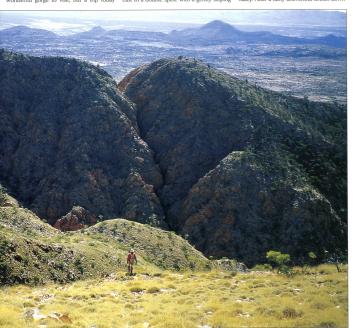


No doubt all this country is known and named by Aboriginal people but even if someone has been there before there's a special exhilaration in finding an interesting feature yourself.

I recently met a man who spent three days in the 1960s finding Hugh Gorge. He still sounded excited about it! It's still a wonderful gorge to visit, but a trip today along the Hugh Gorge section of the Larapinta Trail couldn't compare with discovering it after a lengthy search.

The exploration of another interesting canyon had its genesis in 1989. We had climbed a peak above our camp and were admiring the panoramic view. The range, only one peak wide where we stood, broadened out to our east to a double spine with a gently sloping red cliffs. We stood above a long line of upper cliffs, unable to descend but able to see the jagged, red pinnacles which formed a gateway to the inner gorge and suggested a name. 'Portals Canvon'.

Every spur that might have taken us down into the gorge ended in cliffs, forcing us to backtrack to the saddle at the top of the valley. After a fairly uneventful stretch down-



Grahame Muller has a closer look at the elusive Portals Canvon.

upland valley separating the two ridges. Unlike the Canyon of Defiance, this was shown on the map as quite a significant creek but it would also take a few days to reach.

After planning but failing to visit this valley on some intervening trips, we had our first success in 1999. On a day-trip from a base camp on the south side of the range, we climbed to the top and gained our first close view. The 'gentle valley' was deceptive—it soon turned into a gorge which cut deep into the range, backed by a fidge of steep.

stream we were turned back at an impassable drop but did get a closer look at the Portals, one of which turned out to be a tottery column of rock with a gorge on either side of it. If we were going to gain access to the most interesting section, we would have to enter the canyon from below.

Circumavigating this section of the range took us two days. We spent a morning slogging down a dry creek that ran parallel with the range before turning into a convenient gap providing access to the northern side. After passing a few filthy, cattle-polluted mud holes, we were relieved to find some clean water for the night in a side gorge inaccessible to stock.

It was a dry year and we were a bit worried about the water situation at the mouth

Water

The key to extended trips in the Macdonnells is finding drinkable water to some the state of the state of the state of the issue as difficult as you might imagine, even up any mindil, which then emerge as springs, so Many of the goognes in the main regores and the state of the Many of the goognes in the main regores as springs, so Many of the goognes in the main regores as springs, so stope between hill and palan. Of the rew will be a polluted pool below a rocky bar at the entrance to a gonge but you find dean water upstream above the bar. Pools can sometimes be found in small gorges in the lower hills that run parallel with the main range.

After rain, you may find water in sandy hollows in some creek-beds; indeed, the Aboriginal people used to dig for water here. In my experience, stagnant water soon develops a noxious looking green sum. One such pool is Birthday Waterhole in Stuart Rass, on the Larapinta Trail. It has the added disactivantage of being the sum of the sum of

If you want to walk off the beaten track I suggest using known waterholes as base camps while finding new water sources for future trips. Then you won't have to weigh yourself down carrying gallons of water.

of Portals Canyon. When we reached it early the next afternoon we could scarcely believe our eyes, a series of crystal-clear pools dropped down through the bection, and over a rocky bar to the best camp-site I've ever seen in the Macdonnells-large, flat, surrounded by beautiful trees and shrubs and only metres from the water. It has an ambience to which photos don't do justice but which fills the weary walker with a sense of peace and contentment.

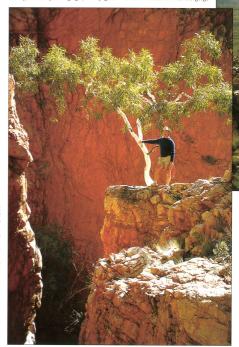
We passed a ferny pool upstream before the canyon walls closed in, forcing us to remove our boots to wade through a series of dark, icy pools. The water deepened and by the time we reached a short, compulsory swim before a high chockstone there were only two of us left. The cold water seemed to go to Grahame's head. 'Better than those bloody shitty little Blue Mountains canyons! he exclaimed, although he did admit later that perhaps this was a little extreme. He was the only member of the party who climbed the chockstone (I wasn't prepared to try it in bare feet) and continued on a little further, but still far short of the Portals. I vowed to return with sand-shoes, thermals and a rope.

Which was exactly what we did in 2000. Properly prepared, we were through the compulsory swims and up the chockstone in a trice despite the water being deeper after two major floods earlier in the year. After a few more deep pools, we broke out into the middle section of Portals Gorge where we spent half an hour thawing out in the sunshine.

We continued up this hidden valley cut deep into the mountain range. It offered one delight after another: cascades of pools in small, rusty-red gorges; flat stretches of white pebbles and pale grey bedrock; tantalising sinewy, shadowy side gorges; dainty ghost

seemed unclimbable but a wrestle with the rock revealed its weaker points. We wriggled up beside the chock and then scaled a nearvertical wall above it.

The orange walls again closed in around us and it really seemed as though we might make our way right through, beneath the Portals themselves. But the gorge



Dainty ghost gums with their powdery white limbs flung out against glowing orange rock'—Bruce Baldwin takes it easy in Portals Canyon.

gums with their powdery white limbs flung out against glowing orange rock walls; vistas of the unbroken cliffs hundreds of metres above us at the top of the range and of tottering red pinnacles looming dangerously over the creek-bed. At first glance a large, high chockstone in front of a waterfall turned a corner and became a deep, enclosed pool topped by a smooth, near-vertical chute curving away out of sight; it was only a short stretch of canyon but abseil gear would be needed to enter it and that would only be possible from the top end. Like the Canyon of Defiance, this



Planning

John Thwaite and Grahame Muller on a ridge above the Canyon of Defiance.

When is the best time of year to visit the Macdonnells? Before June and after August it's likely to be hot and fly infest-ed. During the intervening months, if you're lucky, you'll have fine, warm days and frosty nights cold enough to kill off annoying insects. But don't leave your cain jacket behind as a series of squalls continued to the control of the cold weather and downpours of rain, or even size to in the hishest too in the hishest tool.

What maps are available? The Hermannsburg and Alice Springs 1:250 000 are surprisingly useful though you may need a magnifying glass to read them. AUSLIG produces 1:100 000 black and white dye-line maps. The 1:50 000 Royal Australian Survey Corps maps cover some areas. Many walkers use aerial photos.

canyon seemed determined to guard its inner sanctum from prving human eyes.

There are many more interesting canyons in the Macdonnells but my latest goal is to reach a high, isolated peak, which although probably not too hard to climb is difficult to access. Id noticed it on the map, seen it in the far distance, even flown past it in a small plane, but August 2000 was the first time I managed to get a decent look at it. From a base camp in an unnamed gorge, one cloudy aftermoon Pat and 1 set out to

explore a side creek and possibly climb the range for a view over the other side.

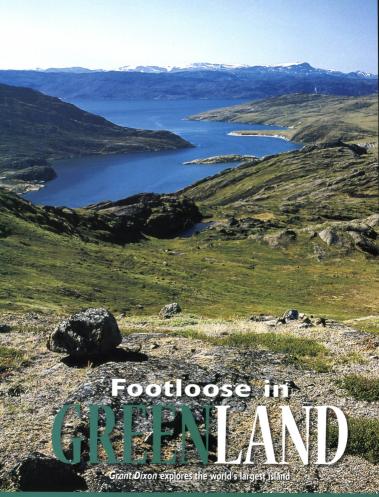
Pat's knee was playing up and I had a hard time persuading her to continue (most unlike Pat, who usually leaps around the



hills like a gazelle\) Just this next bump'. I kept on saying, hoping it would be the last. Finally we reached Pat's 'absolutely no further' top from where we could see the peak's rounded summit poking up beyond a few hundred metres of almost flat ridgetop. So 'absolutely no further' became 'just this last bit' and soon we stood at the edge of a deep valley.

Below us a white creek-bed wound across the valley, a magical path to our Peak Alone' standing surrounded by shafts of surlight that had just broken through the clouds. The mountain rose up to form an almost perfect cone, its white quartz sides traced with usay verias and dotted with native pines. Then the spotlight moved on and turned our attention to other sections of the range which broadened out into a complex roller-coaster of rugged ridges riven by steep gorges. Finally time and the fierce wind drove us back to camp.

The Arrente myths describe how the Macdonnell Ranges were created by an-cestral caterpillars—a strange image until you stand on top of the main range and see the hills crawling in parallel lines far into the distance then clumping together into wisted knots. And in those hundreds of kilometres there's still plenty of exploring to be done, far away from the Larapinta Trail.





ARCTIC ADVENTURES

THE GREENAND ICE-CAP IS 2500 KILOMETRES LONG and up to three kilometres thick in places. It is drained by thousands of valley glaciers and covers 85 per cent of this huge island. However, as Creenland is the world's largest island 42.4 million square kilometres) much ice-free land remains. This coastal step is widest in the west, extending around 200 kilometres inland from Sisimiut, whereas in the east ice stretches close to the coast in many

areas. The most accessible parts of Greenland are in the east and west around the lattice of the Arctic Circle, and on the southwest coast. The main population centres (primarily lunit) are in these regions, but crowds are not an issue. Less than 50 000 people live in Kitaa the western side of Greenland and the population of the entire east coastline-Tunu, or the other side—is a mere 3500 people, com-

outes use — a meter and several villages.
Our approach to Greenland was spectatualn, sea ice and scattered rochy slets appearing below as we descended out of the cloud towards the gravel runway at Kulusuk. I had to wait here for my light to West Greenland but secaped the quarry-like surrounds of the small torimial for a few hours and wandered to Kulusuk. Out of sight and sound of that terminal tow kilometres away this village of wooden houses is perched above a bay full of small techergs. I sat and listened to the pop and crash of ice-bergs bobbing in the bay and the distant howling of chained sled dogs-archetypal Greenland.

The ice-filled fiords, jagged peaks and bare, brown islands of the Ammassalik region to which I would return in three weeks) soon gave way to the gleaming to the horizon and contrasting with the clear, deep-blue sky, the ice-aps surface at first appeared featureless. An extensive network of channels and jewel-like turquoise pools of melt water appeared, then arcuate crevasse lines and moraine bands could be seen as we approached the western margin. Descending past the ice boundary, there was a brief glimpse of colling landscape with sand, grass and low shrubs before the plane landed at Kangerlussuaq.

Kangerlussuaq is oformer US airbase.

Kangerlussuaq is a former US airbase at the head of the 160 kilometre long fiord for which it is named. It was built in 1941 as a refuelling stop for flights to wartime Europe and was also used during the Cold War. Architecturally and climatically, it is unlike any of Greenland's

Grant Dixon appreciates the view from Arnaq Qallunaq over Maligiaq Fiord, West Greenland. All photos by the author other permanent settlements as it is far inland, giving it a stable climate with warm, drv summers and very cold winters.

After visiting the edge of the Greenland ice eap—a mere 25 kilometres seal—planned to turn west again and trek to the coast; a distance of 200 kilometres that would take around two weeks to cover. My route from Kangertussua, but he coast at Sismitu would follow some of the Arctic Circle Trek. This is Creenland's most popular long walk fall though not particularly popularly and it is mostly trackless. Late June is quite early in the summer season so I didn't expect to meet many other walkers.

Russell Glacier is a small and broken glacier with serried ranks of seracs extending up towards the great, white mass of the ice-cap. Its terminal face is a vertical blue-white icecliff grounded on an ice-smoothed pavement where the convoluted folds of the ancient rocks can be seen amongst the scattered ice blocks fallen from the glacier above. The glacier gives rise to a turbid river which flows west. I followed the river past splashes of pink Niviarsiag (Rose Bay, the national flower of Greenland) on the sandy valley floor. Walking across terraces blanketed with yellow grass and prostrate willow or birch thickets. I came across a musk ox grazing. These shaggy animals with their heavy homs look almost prehistoric and are surprisingly small. After a brief meeting of eyes the shy animal wandered

Back in Kangerfussuag I bought supplies for 12 days and hitched westwards, a passing ieep saving a few hours of plodding. The walk from the road head was straightforward initially, past grey-blue lakes surrounded by ice-smoothed rocky knolls and bluffs. Howwer, later on the hilly terrain, mrashly flats, low thickets, and my heavy pack combined to make it feel surprisingly strenuous.

Clouds of insects swarmed during the warm, still day; mostly small flies that didn't bite. I hoped they were not an omen of things to come: the mosquito is one of the smallest of Greenland's wildlife, but easily the most numerous during a brief period in midsummer. I had hoped that my June trip would be early enough to avoid them.

I camped on an exposed knoll above a lake rimmed with the fluffy heads of cottongrass, hoping any breeze would disperse the insects. I eventually retired to the protection of my tent and tied to sleep despite the daylight. At Arctic Carcle latitudes the sun hardy sest during summer, and it is not dark anywhere in Greenland between late May and mid-fuly.

Misty rain and a cold breeze accompanied me the next day as I wandered through an undulating landscape; at least there weren't any insects. Ankle-high birch and willow displayed spring growth in places but many areas were still dead after eight months of being buried beneath snow. I crossed several rocky ridges with scattered boulders dumped as the ice-cap retraeted inland several thousand years ago, and descended to camp beside Amitosvaug Lake.

The morning's stunning reflections soon gave way to a cold wind and showers. It

seemed a long 20 kilometres along the shore to the far end of the lake. For much of the day I walked bent forward, gazing downward, appreciating the delights of the ground cover. Small cream and purple wild flowers added colour to the mosaic of yellow grass and green mosses, which sometimes grew

high fall to the far side of the lake, but the mountains are rounded, abraded by the advance and retreat of the ice-cap.

I descended to Kangerluatsiarsuaq, a large bay with an extensive beach, but the temperature and breeze were not conducive to sun-baking. After a quick lunch in the lee of



The 'ice-filled fiords, jagged peaks and bare, brown islands of the Ammassalik region' as seen looking east from a 1000 metre peak on Ammassalik Island.

over the occasional shed caribou antler. The calls of small birds, ducks on the lake and the cries of falcons, invisible amongst the rock bluffs above, completed the sensory experience.

A broad, marshy valley leads from the far end of Amitsorsuaq to an even larger lake, beyond which the terrain becomes more mountainous. Smooth bluffs some 500 metres

a boulder I headed away from the shore and steeply up on to a dissected rocky plateau made of parallel rocky ridges with elongated lakes and tams filling the intervening guidness. This was the first extensive section of higher country I had traversed on the trek so I searched for a spot to camp and take in the view. Now more than 60 kilometres away, the ice-ap could be

glimpsed gleaming beyond the many lakes and hills to the east.

The still and clear morning came with clouds of mosquitoes so, despite the radiant warmth of the sun, I remained well covered while eating breakfast and packing up; it was either that or liberal applications of insect repellent.

Once walking it was generally possible to strip off somewhat and even walk in shorts.

strip off somewhat and even walk in shorts.

After a steep descent from the plateau, I
wound my way across the linineq valley flats
to a river. The deep, slow-flowing stream
drains the large Tasersuaq Lake to Maligiaq
Fiord, the head of which now glistened in

the distance. A single, battered canoe abandoned on the river bank provided a way to cross the river and remain dry. However, solo walking has its pitfalls—it is desirable to leave the canoe on the south bank as most walkers come from this direction. I crossed the stream in the canoe and left my rucksack on the far bank, then brought the canoe back to the south bank and swam across intire. The water was refreshing to say the

Heading west once more, I followed the river bank and a series of terraces to camp overlooking the head of Maligian, Fiord. This is a salt-water inlet but it would be a couple more days before I could gaze from the coastal mountains out across Davis Strait, beyond which lies Canadás Baffin Island. Camped near me that evening were the only other walkers I met during the trek, four Danish students who shared the large trout they'd caught with me. It was a tasty change from my otherwise bland fare.

Next moning I traversed a rising terrace above the inlet, then climbed to a pass behind the rocky knoll of Arnaq Qallunaq (the Danish woman to a stunning view. I clear air and bright sun made the landscape colours seen aimost sureal-blue lakes were set amongst groy tox whalebacks and the green birch and willow shrubbery, with earling the calm blue green sea below. Descending past the lakes, I ambled across the slopes and amongst banded gnesist rock outcrops before climbing to camp by a lake overlooking the fiord.

■ I sat and listened to the pop and crash of icebergs bobbing in the bay and the distant howling of chained sled dogs archetypal Greenland. ■

Greenland



The day had remained still and it was quite warm by late afternoon; the mosquitoes were revved up. The only options were to sit out-side overdressed or hide in the tent, which was almost as hot. When out photographing later that day, it was hard to concentrate on composition due to the whine of mosquitoes in my ears and numerous black specks dancins in front of the lens.

Momings were the best time of day—cool, often breezy, with clear air and far fewer mosquitoes. Early the next day I headed up into more rugged terrain. The climate is wetter in these coastal mountains and the vegetation changes accordingly; willow scrub,

herb banks and moss beds become more common. While walking is slower, every rise or bluff hides another impressive view making it constantly interesting. I crested a broken ridge and disturbed an Arctic fox on a ledge just below, its dark coat contrasting with a light, bushy tail. It starde golden-eyed at me for several minutes before bounding away.

I reached the edge of the coastal escarpment suddenly. A large lake was cradled far below and the view extended across Ikertoog, the mouth of the fiord, to Davis Strait beyond. A steep descent and sidle above the lake brought me to the shores of the narrow Imartuninnguag Channel. A local family had set up a fishing camp here, with split fish spread out to dry on the nearby rock slabs. We had a sort of conversation over coffee and biscuits but there weren't many shared English words.

Small, colourful wooden houses climb the steep, rocky

slope of an elongated island just across the narrow channel. I hitched a lift across to this tiny settlement of Sarfannguit (the little channel) in a fishing dingly and treated myself to an ice-cream at the village shop and a few luxuries for the night's dinner before returning to the mainland and wandering a bit further to camp and enjoy them.

Climbing steeply away from the coast again, a gully opened to a lake-floored basin. After another ascent and a barren pass, I descended through a moss-carpeted basin, then down beside a canyon where deep snowdrifts lay in the shaded depths. The blue waters of Utoqqaat Inlet glistened below.

waters of Olouquan line gusterieu perow. Jumping from rock to rock, I made a dry crossing of a stream just below the cascading outlet of a large lake. Lunch in the sun was pleasant but the spectacular cirrus clouds that filled the sky did not give me confidence in the good weather lasting for long. By the time I had climbed to the second pass of the day it was grey and cold.

I camped behind the narrow beach of yet another lake and then headed westward again. Above the waters of Kangerluarsuk Tulleq Fiord I traversed a coastal terrace, then

up to the long Qerrortusup Majoriaa pass. Sisimiut was near—the swathes of broken shrubbery caused by locals using their snow machines as the snow melted were evidence of this. I followed a valley beneath the ramparts of Nasaasaaq, the distinctive 784 metre peak that overlooks Sismiut, but the town itself is hidden until one is virtually upon it.

Sisimiut is 75 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle, the northernmost town with an ice-free port year-round and the most southern town in West Greenland with dog-sled traffic. The town is the home of 5000 people and

islands provide many trekking opportunities. I planned a circular trek around the 40 kilometre wide Ammassalik Island. The rolling, ice-smoothed landscape of the west of the island has many cliffs and ravines, giving way to the jagged, higher (less than 1000 metre) peaks of the north and east. The vegetation here is sparse and tundra-like and there are extensive areas of rocky uplands.

Heading out of town I passed the cemetery—an array of freshly painted, white crosses decorated with bright, plastic flowers—and continued up Flower Valley, dotted with its own patches of floral colour. In the Ammassalik region vegetation gives way to rock and



The weird, weathered shapes of stranded icebergs in Tasilaq Inlet, East Greenland.

probably as many sled dogs—the howls of these dogs, chained up for the summer, are a constant soundtrack in the town. Clusters of coloured, box-like multistorey buildings vie with wooden houses for level space above the small harbour.

East Greenland is different from the west both culturally and linguistically, unit people migrated here later and the few European settlers arrived more than a century ago. The traditional Inuit activities of sealing and hunting are still widely practised dalbeit using Western technology and play a major role in providing mest. Tastilaq (the place which is almost like alleb, situated on Ammassaik Island, is the largest town on the east coast with a population of 1800 people. The ubiquitous, colourful wooden houses climb the slopes around the wide, open fiord surrounded by rocky mountains for which the town is named.

The ice-cap lies close to the coast in the Ammassalik region, its glaciers drain to the sea and calve numerous icebergs. An icefree peninsula 75 kilometres long and nearby scree at much lower altitudes than in West Greenland; soon after passing a green-fringed lake I entered terrain of brown and grey. Climbing higher, a lake basin still contained drifts of winter snow and large slabs of broken ice were adrift in the lake. White and blues entered my immediate world.

I waded through deep snow across a pass and set up my tent on a rock slab beside a small tarn, perched overlooking the Sermille Firord. This massive find is fed by many tended the firord. This massive find is fed by many tended totted with icebergs. The ice-cap and otted with icebergs. The ice-cap itself is visible beyond. I admired the view from my tended to the visible smade it less pleasant outside), the tent as the evening progressed (clouds of of blackflies made it less pleasant outside), the sum finally dipping below the mountains to the north-west (albeit for only a couple of hours) at I am.

The next morning I descended rock slabs on to the Mittivakkat Glacier, a short cut to avoid descending further and traversing rugged terrain near the coast. The glacier surface was smooth and crevasse free but instep crampons made the going easier. After around

three kilometres I neared the far side of the glacier where an ice-cliff fell directly into a glacial lake. I eventually outflanked it by climbing further up the glacier and descending a steep snow-slope.

I scrambled over loose moraine ridges sporadic, green cushion-plants and pink flowers dry-footed. Sitting on the far bank, tearyeved, as my feet painfully re-warmed after their dip I reflected on the sense of replacing boots and socks with sandals for the cros-

A warm morning and sweaty climb brought me to a pass leading back east. Snow still

After lunch and a siesta. I headed up towards the nearest rocky peak. Tedious snow plodding eventually gave way to rocky sections on a narrowing ridge; the final scramble was quite airy. The isolated summit fell away precipitously to the east, providing panoramic views. I was now high enough for the ice-can to form the horizon to the west Fastwards beyond a frozen inlet icebergs floated in Ammassalik Fiord and sea ice choked the channels between the rocky islands. Several glacier tongues descended from another range of jagged peaks across the valley and I could hear the roar of the glacial river that drained them far below.

The stable weather continued as I descended a complex series of terraces and slabs of banded rock. After following a series of lakes down the valley and climbing high to pass bluffs in places. I eventually crossed a cascading stream to the shore of a large lake, Qorlortorq So. Lush vegetation lined the stream, bright against the surrounding grev rock, but the clouds of mosquitoes in this sheltered spot discouraged lingering. I flushed a couple of snow buntings (fat ground birds) from their rocky shelters.

I camped early, on top of a bluff above the lake, eager to take in the surroundings and the still weather. Scattered tarns and glacial boulders decorated the surrounding slabs. The lake below mirrored the mountains opposite. But the mosquitoes! Relaxing outside the tent required a head net, which did little to enhance the view.

My final days were quite leisurely. I

rocky peak, but balmy weather and deep. soft snow made sitting in the sun more attractive than plugging higher. My route to the shore of Tasilag Inlet entailed a pleasant descent of grassy slopes carpeted with pink, purple and yellow wild flowers but ended with another painfully cold ford.

On my final night I camped above a small bay at the head of the inlet where a number of small icebergs were grounded. driven ashore by southerly winds. The thawing icebergs, intricately sculpted with flutings. small arches and undercut rims, shone gleaming white and deep blue in the sun



providing colour. The flat outwash plains between rocky ribs were attractive but the saturated silt between the braided streamchannels sometimes contained patches of quicksand

I descended a steep, bouldery slope to a stream that drained another tongue of the Mittivakkat Glacier. It was too wide to ford

covered the frozen lake in the pass, hiding the shore line and forcing me to traverse the soft slopes above to eliminate any chance of falling through the ice. Taking advantage of the good weather, I climbed higher up bouldery slopes and rock slabs, then plugged steps in soft snow to set my tent on a high shelf below a range of jagged, rocky peaks.

the next morning

I waited for low tide and walked easily around the shore back to Tasilaq town. Grounded icebergs stood off the various gravelly beaches, yellow flowers dotted the bright green vegetation and a slight breeze meant that the mosquitoes took a rest for my final walk in Greenland.

STAND BETTER AT THE STAND

Catherine Lawson paddles around a tropical paradise





HINCHINBROOK ISLAND RECLINES LIKE A SLEEPing dragon, a mist-covered, mangrove-fringed monster with a jagged spine of rugged peaks. Sandwiched between the Great Barrier Reef and the ancient tropical rainforests of the Cardwell Range, Hinchinbrook is Australia's largest island National Park. It appears tantalisingly close from the mainland; however. four kilometres of crocodile-infested waters separate Hinchinbrook from civilisation.

Accessible to boaters, hikers and sea kayakers. Hinchinbrook Island is a raw and inhabitable place where secluded beaches and turbulent bays are pounded by an almost constant south-easterly swell.

For self-sufficient sea kayakers seeking exhilarating paddling, encounters with dugongs and sea turtles, and balmy nights spent camped under swaving coconut palms this is as good as it gets.

we lottered amongst the green sea turtles. As the tide dropped, we edged in close to the mangroves beneath Mt Pitt to spook blue-spotted stingrays and watch them shoot away through the clear water.

Paddling adventures in the far north are frequently interrupted by rogue salt-water crocodiles, cyclonic monsoonal seas and the deadly box jellyfish and irukandji stingers that plague the tropical waters for more than half

Cloud obscures the view as the author paddles past Mt Bowen. Hinchinbrook Island's tallest peak. All photos by David Bristow

fact file The trip Allow seven days to paddle Hinchinbrook's east coast between the mainland towns of Lucinda and Cardwell, or on to Mission Beach. Pack plenty of food, a fuel stove (no fires permitted), warm clothing, a first-aid kit, map, local tide chart and insect repellent. Freshwater creeks provide excellent water. Camping National Park camp-sites (\$4 a person, a night) must be booked in advance on the Web site at www.epa.gld.gov.au where you can also download a local tide chart **Getting there** By air: take a flight to Townsville or Cairns and a bus to Mission Beach. Coral Sea Kayaks hires single- and double expedition sea kavaks (including safety equipment and spare paddles) from \$50 to \$90 a day. They can also transfer you and your kayak to launch sites at Lucinda (\$100 a trip) or Cardwell (\$50 a trip). Phone (07) 4068 9154 or email coralseakayaking@bigpond.com By road: those bringing their own Rockingham Ray kayaks can launch from either Lucinda or Cardwell. Paddle both ways or travel one way and arrange a car shuttle or catch a bus back to your starting-point. Hinchinbrook A Mt Strainch Hinchinbrook Island Thorsborne track : Route -----Not for navigation WILD AUTUMN 2005

the year. The good news is that from May to October nature cuts sea kayakers some slack. With the arrival of winter the stingers and cyclones disappear, crocodiles tend to head up river out of the open sea, and the cooler, less humid temperatures make for cosy camping and comfortable paddling.

The one unchanging variable is the weather. The seas off Hinchinbrook's exposed east coast remain notoriously unpredictable, trans-



Landing in paradise at beautiful Nina Bay.

forming from innocuous and glassy water into steep, terrifying peaks in the blink of an eye.

The Bureau of Meteorology issued a strong-wind warning as my partner and I prepared to launch our heavily-laden sea kayaks from the sleepy seaside town of Cardwell but we were undeterred. Having paddled and sailed in the area for more than three years, had come to appreciate that around Hinchin-brook, things were always either much better or significantly worse than predicted. True to form, deepste dark skies and dire warnings the first day's paddle across Missionary Bay was interrupted by nothing more than the gentle 'philf' of sea turtles surfacing, and a solitary dolphin fishing the shallows off Hecate Point.

Our expedition sea kayaks were filled with ten days' worth of food, fuel and camping gear; I was looking forward to lessening the load as we ate up and strengthened *en* route. Ten days are a long time to endure dried noodles so we had packed a bounty of tropical fruits and vegetables that weighed heavily on my first-day arms.

Launching from the beach opposite our Cardwell home, our estimated nine-day jour ney would take us around the island's mangrove-fringed north-western shores and down the turbulent east coast to George Point. Most paddlers make a one-way journey from south to north but we decided that after paddling trek upstream for a drink. At dusk we enjoyed the other reward for reaching Macushla, when we sat on the sand and watched the sun set over the sea—not an easy thing to experience on the east coast.

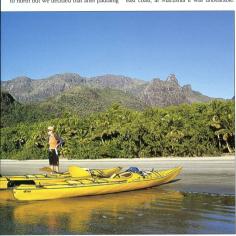
The sunset was a perfect end to our first day on the water but it heralded the arrival of vast, hungry clouds of mosquitoes. While the problem is less severe on the breezy east coast at Macushla it was unbearable.

Launching into glassy seas, we paddled round the protection of Cape Richards to the island's north and smacked head first into a 20–25 knot south-easterly. It turned out to be the start of things to come. The wind continued unabated at 20–30 knots or more for the remainder of our time on the island's exposed east coast, at times firting on us like bullets that exploded down over the island's supred raused.

On the long, weary ride over South Shepherd Bay, the wind and swell were more of an enduring inconvenience and we were distracted from our discomfort by dozens of enormous, green sea turtles. A barnacled head would bob just ahead of us until the turtle caught a glimpse of the approaching kayaks and splashed back to safety beneath

the waves Our exhausting day was extended unnecessarily by the fact that we couldn't find our camp-site. Expecting to find the usual camping ground facilities (toilets, water tanks, perhaps a picnic table), we paddled past the sea-kayaker camp at Sunset Beach and were then forced to keep going to Banshee Bay. While toilets and tables do exist at some of the more heavily frequented hiker camps, the sea-kayaker camps are merely beaches with space for a tent or two above the hightide mark. It's refreshing to know that the human impact on much of the island is so limited that toilets and cleared camp-sites are not necessary.

Despite the extra kilometres of paddling. Banshee Bay is a magical spot. On the beach Banshee Bay is a magical spot. On the beach were found only each other's footprints and our winds/ camp site beneath causains trees was made comfortable with some crafty beach comber's diffusord furniture. We collected bits and pieces of timber washed ashore by the tide and constructed rudimentary chairs and tables from old milk crates and stray clarks. then promotly toxased out in the tent.



into the predominantly south-easterly seas down the east coast, the ride back home would be swift. Our instincts were right. While we spent six days travelling south, it would take just three days to ride the crests of a roaring swell on the return leg.

Day one on the water presented the perfect conditions for dawdling-nothing more challenging than a long, slow paddle beneath sunny skies. Having learned to make the most of perfect conditions around the island. we loitered amongst the green sea turtles. As the tide dropped, we edged in close to the mangroves beneath Mt Pitt to spook blue-spotted stingrays and watch them shoot away through the clear water. We lingered over the sea-grass beds that carpet Missionary Bay's dugong sanctuary but had no luck sighting the silent sea cows. Only 1700 dugongs are estimated to live on the entire east coast of Australia, so dugong encounters are rare.

Macushla camping ground was a welcome sight at the end of the day, spoiling us with facilities absent elsewhere on the island: a gas barbecue, sheltered picnic table and a composting toilet. There was even a wriggler-free water tank so we didn't have to Cruising into tranquil Nina Bay revived our Robinson Crusoe fautasies. A perfect arch, the white beach is fringed with coconuit palms and the dramatic summit of Mt Bowen towers over it.

The tent was impossibly humid when closed but if we opened the door the mossies plagued us, happily grawing through the lathers of tropical-strength repellent that we applied continuously throughout the night. We spent the long hours of darkness alternating between equally uncomfornable zipper-up, zipper-down tent scenarios until Loculdrit stand it any longer and abandoned the tent to coil up on the picnic table. All was fine until it began to rain. At dawn I was walking the beach, begging the sun to rise so we could get going. Suffec to say it took a lot of strong coffee to soothe two cranky campers the next morning.

It was suprising that the wind slackened as we pulled out of the bay early the next morning, nudging the kayaks along Ramsay abg/s eight kilometres of yellow beach. The paddling was effortless and I settled into a paddling was effortless and I settled into a stunning backdrop of the peaks of Mt Bowen (1142 metres). the Thumb, the Prophet and Nina Peak, presenting a dark and dramatic image that was breathtaking.

Towards the end of Ramsay Bay we were jolted back to reality by our first human encounter—a dozen fresh-looking bushwalkers heading off along the 32 kilometre Thorsborne Track. After two magical days spent

in solitude on the water, it was a shock to realise we were not alone.

Cruising into tranquil Nina Bay revived our Robinson Crusoe fantasies. A perfect arch, the white beach is fringed with coconut palms and the dramatic summit of Mt Bowen towers over it. It was rugged, beau-

tiful and utterly deserted. The only down side was that the tide was on its way out, so we had to haul our heavy boats a long way up the heach

Protected from the south-easterly winds. Nina Bay provided a quiet sanctuary for the night. When we launched the next day and attempted to round tiny Agnes Island. we found ourselves fighting a 30knot wind and a two metre swell. Edging across the shallow isthmus that links Agnes Island to the shore. the retreating tide revealed a reef of jagged coral bombies. We were in danger of being washed against them. We dared not venture any further so in absolute frustration we turned round and headed into a contrastingly serene bay.

The unnamed cove south of Little Ramsay Bay was our favourite camp. It was free of mossies, the perfectly clear creek shaded by paper-barks, and we welcomed the opportunity to dry out our gear and explore the neighbouring headlands on foot.

Anxiety awoke us early the next morning: we were up and packed before the coffee finished brewing. Keen to face the job ahead, we pushed off and into a messy cauldron of white water. Enormous whirlpools whipped around us, caused by violent, two metre swells that rebounded off the island's sheer granite cliffs to our right and doubled back on us so that waves came from all directions, sometimes simultaneously. The scenery went unnoticed as the task of steadying my kayak, struggling to make headway against the wind and keeping a lid on my nerves demanded my complete concentration

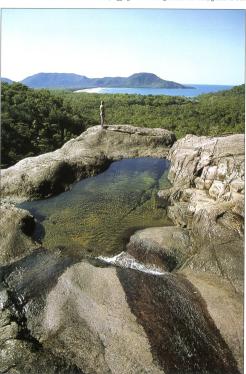
Time is sometimes difficult to measure in rough sea conditions; seconds become stretched by adrenalin. Two long, exhausting hours passed hefore we nudged into Zoe Bay and set our sights on her magical, passed ringed amphitheatre. I had been waiting to see this beautiful shift for some time: two sapphire hullent white beach, giving way to an emerald rainforest. High above, a waterfall trickles over a wedge of regate.

An easy, 20-minute stroll behind the dunes led to the deep, clear waterhole beneath Zoe Falls. The promise of a freshwater bath was too much to resist. Walking to the top of the falls, we bathed high above the world in smooth rock pools, sunning ourselves on

warm granite slabs and taking in the ex-

At low tide, we sat on the sand and waited for the onslaught of Zoe Bay's unusual crab armies. With iridescent, opal-like bodies, the tiny soldier crabs surfaced on cue and scurried about in their chaotic battalions, digging

supplies. Despite carrying provisions for ten full days, I had underestimated just how demanding the paddling would be. On previous coastal trips we had been able to supplement our rations with bush tucker collected along the way. Green coconuts had been gathered for milk, grated to boil grater to the control of the con



The expansive view from the top of Zoe Falls.

their bright blue bodies into the sand when we approached. It was a remarkable and unexpected afternoon's entertainment; when had weather kept us land-locked at Zoe Bay for two luscious days, we didn't mind a bit.

Our only concerns were the unrelenting poor weather and our rapidly diminishing with rice and cut into slithers that we toasted and seasoned with spices. We had gathered wild oysters, harvested bush lemons and spent entire afternoons cracking tropical almonds that we roasted on the camp-fire. As we were within the National Park on this tip, we were subsisting solely on our supplies.

At Zoe Bay on day six the cookie- and chocolate-bar supplies were getting alarmingly

We had to keep moving. When we finally left Zoe Bay, the seas were predictably demanding. We had anticipated that rounding Hillock Point-the island's most eastern point-would be the toughest stretch with the weather at its worst. The deafening sound of waves thundering off the high seacliffs made communication impossible and the rain-clouds that descended upon us turned our grey world surreal.

We could just make out the distant buzz of a motor somewhere in the gloom, but with the swell shielding the horizon it wasn't until it was almost on top of us that we saw the small aluminium dinghy

It was headed straight towards us and was only 200 metres away when we at last made ourselves visible by furiously waving our bright-vellow paddles. Shocked expressions flashed across the faces of three rain-soaked fishermen as they passed close by. We wondered aloud what the hell they were doing out on a day like this. They were probably thinking the same about us.

As we surfed on to the sand at Sunken Reef Bay, the rain paused and a finger of light broke through the clouds to illuminate the little beach. We snacked in the sunshine

> Catherine Lawson Based in far north Queensland, Catherine

With black clouds looming, we relaunched into the dark mêlée and prepared to do battle with our familiar foe. The swell carried us on at double time and by staying at least a kilometre from the coast the effect of the rebounding seas was kept to a manageable level.

Arriving at our favourite no-name cove at low tide, the kayaks skirted just centimetres above a reef of colourful coral bombies and darting parrot-fish that hadn't been visible on our previous visit. As I anxiously searched for a passage through the reef, trying not to scrape the coral and the underbelly of my plastic boat. I turned just in time to watch a sea eagle snare his slithering dinner with one talon.

We found ourselves a table on the pool deck and splurged on gourmet fries and salt-and-pepper squid. I can't begin to explain how exquisite that first ice-cold beer tasted, but I do know that the second one was almost as good. With only a few kilometres left, we paddled slowly to camp with broad smiles and fuzzy heads and spent the night reliving our most exciting kayaking adventure to date.

We didn't see any evidence that the sun actually dawned on our final day of paddling. However, only a half-day paddle separated us from a hot shower, so we pushed into the thick rain-clouds with gusto. The clouds met the sea, leaving us paddling blind, navigating solely by the direction of the slight



Perfect conditions for enjoying the view on the return paddle north.

and contemplated paddling a further 11 kilometres to the mainland for more supplies. With only three meagre days' worth of food left, the promise of treats was tempting but Lucinda's six kilometre long sugar wharf stretching out to sea was a symbol of the civilised world we were not ready to reioin. We reasoned that with a south-easterly swell pushing us north, we could cover the return trip more quickly and be safely home before the food ran out. Besides, a few lean days would be a small price to pay for the

unbroken seclusion.

Day seven had been a long, energetic paddle that had left us exhilarated. And as we now predicted that we would make it home in two days' time, we had a full day's rations to finish! We celebrated with creamy coffees and huge bowlfuls of rich tomato and lentil pasta topped with the last of the precious Parmesan cheese. It was a treat only truly hungry campers could appreci-Propelled by the promise of lunch at

Hinchinbrook Island's only resort, we hit the water early the next day. We weren't surprised that it rained as we endured a rock'n'roll adventure across Ramsay Bay on a swell that broadsided us all the way round Cape Sandwich.

Casually strolling into Cape Richards's posh resort restaurant, our sandy feet, matted hair and wet board shorts attracted a few glances. swell. Visibility was down to 100 metres in any direction, but the gentle 'phiff' behind me was unmistakable.

A large dugong and calf had just surfaced for air and I turned around in time to watch their rounded torsos arc in unison. With a swirl of their tails, they disappeared. During the next 30 minutes, at least a dozen dugongs surfaced and resurfaced around us, unafraid of our noiseless vessels.

Despite the gloom of the grey mist and rain, watching the dugongs' sleek bodies slicing through the still, glassy sea was a magical experience. We waited in shivering silence until the dugongs had moved on to greener sea-grass beds and squealed with the joy of getting so close to so many of these gorgeous creatures. It was the moment of the trip, and the reason we plan to return to Hinchinbrook, Soon,

Details Distractions

The moods and textures of Tasmania's World Heritage Areas, by Lyndon Giffard



The beauty is in the detail: lichen patterns on a rock in the Forth River valley, near the Overland Track.



Mood lighting illuminates a waterfall on the Overland Track.





A weathered tree near Lake Rhona.







Morning mist rises from Lake Vera, Central Tasmania.

Wintr

A cold snap in spring turns the Major Mitchell Plateau, in Victoria's Grampians, into a wint

I'v contains man, wasts in the Verbouch Airs and winterest in the mountains has never warred. But luned by the promise of great view, and reliable worther. I agreed to go to a region where I have never done anything more than a few day walks although it is no less scenic than the flight Country. Crampians weather is great in spring and the wild flowers will be out. I was assured by Stephen, one of my regular walking companions. Our first attempt at crossing the Major Mitchell Plateau had been aborted a warrenire when the forecast had predicted showery weather, it sounded like at pifful excise at the time-fand still dose!) so we weren't going to fee anything stop us on our next attempt. Again, it looked as though the weather wasn't

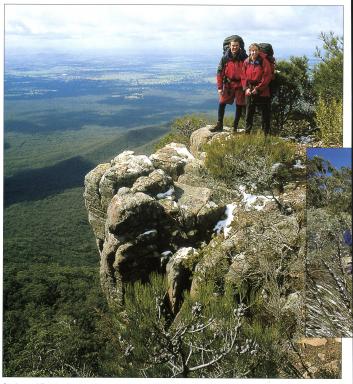
going to do us any favours. With a forecast of show showes, down to 400 metres (considered a very low altitude for some very in the dopths of winter) we had to prepare outselves for numbing cold.

As Stephen, Zov. Toru, and Heft the Gramphans Bouriet, Road, walking along the Mt. William Track, everything looked promising. There'd been some feative showers early in the morning but the sun was out and we consulted ourselves that the work of the weather was behind us. After a few kilometrie of easy walking we crossed Fyans Creek in brillant standing, and the outside wild flowers beer and these adding a spassh of colour to the surroundings. Climbing steadily lowards. Mt. William we possed insurectus small eadily towards Mt William we passed numerous small

Stephen Hamilton near the highest point of the Major Mitchell Plateau, looking out towards the Serra Range. All photos by the author

weekeng onderland; by Glenn van der Knijff





Stephen and Zoë Hamilton look happy despite the cold! The plains of western Victoria stretch out behind the eastern edge of the Major Mitchell Plateau.

creeks, most of them seasonal, and climbed to a good lookout rock with a grandstand view towards a broken cliffine. A few small streams leaped from the cliff into the valley below; these tiny waterfalls would only last a few days without further rain.

We became aware of a cold, southerly breeze while we were resting and dark prooding clouds moved in quickly over the Serra Range and Cathedral Rock. Small hail began to fall moments later but quickly stopped again and so

road our views were limited by forest and we were unaware that more heavy clouds were about to descend upon us. The wind began to whip around and the hail started again, more seriously this time. Within inimutes we were walking in a full-scale blizzard, with sow blowing in fiercely from the south and stinging any exposed skin. We reached the Mr William road and although it had only been snowing for about 15 minutes everying was white 1 stopped to put on my overpants and jacket and caught up with the others a few hundred metres up the road at a car a few hundred metres up the road at a car and the same and the

park—the end of the road for vehicles—where a number of tourists were playing in the snow.

Beyond the car park the road climbed steeph towards the summit of Mt William An occasional beam of sunshine pierced the clouds as we ascended, triggering rapid thawing of the snow. Indeed, by the time we reached the top of Mt William most of the snow had melted! A cold wind buffered us as we strained to make out the route ahead through the scudding fog. We needed to rest but stopping on the summit seemed decidedly uninviting, so we headed south along the Mt.

William Range and lunched behind the relative shelter of a small tree.

Further along the range the track was quite rocky and not particularly easy to walk along. The recent rain- and smowfall had produced a lot of surface run-off-unfortunately, most of it seemed to be running along the track making it impossible to keep our shoes dry. With dark clouds brewing again we struggled to remain cheerful. It was a pity to be walking through such magnificent mountain country without being able to see it—we knew that the dramatic east-facing cliffs of the Mt William Range were off to our left somewhere behind a thick cutrain of cloud.

Just as we began the descent into Boundary Gap we were hit by another southerly blast. Wind-driven snow stung us, the temperature plummeted and soon the ground was white again. There was little in the way of natural First Wannon Creek was high on the Major Mitchell Plateau, about an hour's walk away. It was frustrating to find that the climb out of Boundary Gap was much harder than we had envisaged. It was extremely steen and the route seemed to climb straight up over a number of small boulders which we had to climb on hands and knees. A slippery cover of snow made this quite tedious. As I pulled myself over another rock, my rucksack caught on an overhanging branch as I reached the crux and the jolt forced me backwards. I fell only a few metres, but the weight of my rucksack drove me head first into the mud and snowy slush. My warm gloves became uselessly sodden and I was now truly cold for the first time that day.

I cautiously negotiated the final boulders, slippery and treacherous with the cover of snow, and reached the pot of the plateau not far from our camp. I caught up with Stephen and Zoë and we waited for Tony to catch up. An unexpected break in the clouds gave us a fleeting glimpse of the Mt William Range sloping down towards the farmlands of western Victoria. The snow had settled on the trees far down the mountainside, nearly down to the plains. I left the others to admire the view and pushed on towards camp. The blizzard had eased but it was now incredibly codi; conditions felt like those you'd expect when snow-camping in the High Country.

I reached First Wannon Creek and to my surprise found four tents already there. Two

Within minutes we were walking in a full-scale blizzard, with snow blowing in fiercely from the south and stinging any exposed skin.



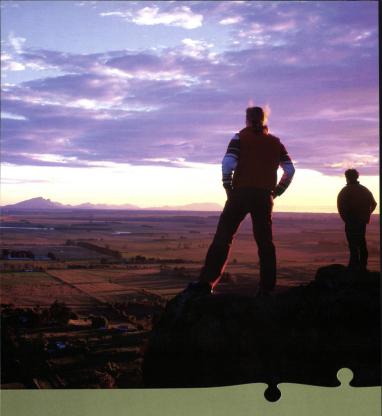
The 'temporary alpine environment rarely seen in the Grampians'; the camp-site at First Wannon Creek.

protection high on the Mt William Range and it was a relief to enter denser forest closer to the saddle. Snow covered the rocky track distingting the walk down tricky and we all slipped at least a couple of times. Tony was walking just behind me and was having particular difficulty, exacerbated by a trouble-some knee. To make matters worse, the weight of the snow had caused the trees and bushes to hang over the track and clods of snow fell on us as we pushed our way along.

The level ground of Boundary Gap offered a brief respite for our jarred knees. Designated as a camping area, the gloom made the gap look more than a little depressing and it was an unpleasant place in which to linger. Our night's camp-site beside



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other walkers whom we had passed at Boundary Gap appeared from behind me. Then my dishevelled walking partners arrived looking the worse for wear. We pitched our tents quickly as yet another burst of snow lashed the mountain. The weather was in a bad mood! Luckly, we could all sit in Stephen's large tent vestibule and we enjoyed a hot meal as light snow showers continued to pass over the camp. We agreed that it was the coldest any of us had ever experienced bush-walking, and it even seemed colder than many nights we'd had while ski-touring nights we'd had will ski-touring night we'd had night ni

We awoke the next morning to dead calm. I poked my head out of the tent and saw that it had stopped snowing. The sky hadn't our jackets for long. Much of the snow had dispapeared and there was a torrent of melt water nunning down the walking track as we climbed, but this was preferable to the cold and fog of the previous day. We soon arrived at the top of a cliffline on the east-en edge of the Major Mitchell Plateau from where we could see across the green plains below our feet. Behind us much of the jagged Serra Range was visible.

The route ahead climbed through wet, scrubby areas at times and over large rock sabs at others. Occasionally, we had to watch out for small cairns to guide us through the maze of rocky outcrops. At the highest point of the plateau, marked as 1167 metres on

forest. It was not pleasant; by the time Stephen and I reached a prominent knoll at the western end of the ridge we were soaked almost to the skin. A boulder offered a limited view over the surrounding bushland but there was little room to manoeuver so we didn't lotter long. While Zoë and Tony battled the scrub somewhere behind us, we decided to get off the ridge to easier ground where we could find a better lunch spot.

The track dropped from the knoll at a brutal grade and it was difficult to keep our footing on the thick carpet of web tark and leaves that made the path slick and slimy. We caught up with the two walkers who'd left camp a few hours before us as they

skidded down the track. We had trouble remaining upright and all slipped on to our backsides a few times. Fortunately, the proceedings were more humorous than dangerous and injury seemed unlikely.

We stumbled into a grassy saddle at the junction with Stockyard Track and sat down for lunch. Zoë and Tony soon joined us—judging by their appearance they had had similar trouble on the descent.

trouble on the descent.

The weather was cold and overcast so we were soon on our way
again. We strolled along Stockyard
Track, views of the Serra Range appearing occasionally through the
trees, and soon turned on to a sidetrack that we followed to a helipad.
From here limmy Creek Track led

down a prominent spur where we could see the final section of our route. For the last few kilometres our group spread out and I found myself walking on my own; this suited me fine. The walking was straightforward compared to the upper sections of Mt William and the Major Mitchell Plateau and I let my mind wander without concentrating on the task at hand soon I was miles away.

The drone of passing whiches snapped me out of my day-dream and hinted that our weekend adventure was nearly over. Quite suddenly I could see the others ahead of me by the roadside. Stephen walked down the road to the Jimmy Creek camping area to hitch a lift back to his car at the beginning of the Mt William Track. We sat and

waited. Except for passing vehicles everyhing was silent. Birds flew past in the gentle breeze, flies buzzed lazily. Wattles flowered nearby, a sign that spring was about arrive. I sat back to enjoy the few remaining moments of solitude, letting my eyes shut and mind wander again, knowing that all too soon we'd be back in the bustle of the city. ••



Zoë Hamilton admires the temporary waterfalls pouring from the south-western edge of Mt William.

improved much but I got up anyway to have a look around the camp-site. It was very cold but the snow-dappled plateau was serenely beautiful, creating a temporary alpine environment rarely seen in the Grampians. The people from the four tents were also waske. They packed and departed hastily, obviously expecting a slow trip, and headed in the direction from where we had come. The other two walkers also left camp early and were moving higher on to the Major Mitchell Plateau where we'd probably catch up to them later.

The sun was trying to penetrate the clouds, which broke up markedly during the next few hours. By the time we had breakfast the sky was almost clear. In the crips sunsinie the camp-site looked pristine and I hastily snapped photographs to capture the scene before the snow thawed.

By late morning we were on our way. The sun warmed us nicely and we didn't need

the map, wind-blown snow still clung to the stunted trees. We could see in nearly all directions from this grandstand viewing point; farmlands, craggy ranges and the snowy summit of Mt William all came into view. A bit further west, where the plateau began to drop away sharply, we were able to see the Serra Range in all its finery. Silhouetted asainst the dark

peaks of the Victoria Range to the west, the jagged crest looked like the back of an aged dinosaur, at the same time mystic and exciting, brooding and sinister. We were captivated. Clouds had begun to creep up on us again so we took a last look and then followed the track down on to a narrow ridge.

emorable activity recen as a trekking trip to Ne

Our route along the ridge weaved through a web of snow-laden scrub and dripping



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- THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES, CHAPTER IVa -

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ADAPT & SURVIVE. In the mid eighties, Scarpa set a new standard for bushwalking boots with the Scarpa Trek. Comfortable, supportive and practically indestructible, each handmade Trek combined the highest-quality Italian construction with a design that was completely focused on the needs of Australian bushwalkers. REVOLUTIONARY EVOLUTION. Now—20 years later—it's time for a few changes. The new Trek Pro has been engineered from the ground up to take advantage of modern design techniques and materials—like incredibly grippy Vibram* Grinta soles, a hydrophobic one-piece leather upper, and completely redesigned inners & cushioning. The end result is a boot that's more rugged, more comfortable and more durably water resistant than ever before—a boot that's perfectly evolved to survive Australian conditions.

Victoria's other wilderness coast

Lake Tyers to Marlo, by Greg Caire

ON THE SOUTHERN VICTORIAN COAST BETWEEN LAKE TYERS AND MARIO. Is a pristine and rarely visited stretch of deserted beach and dunse, making up the eastern extremity of Ninety Mile Beach. This area is surprisingly remote and little visited considering East Gippsland's surprisingly remote and little visited considering East Gippsland's geography and the wallk's proximity to the sea. Vehicle access is only available at the start of the walk finear the Lake Tyers outflow and at Pettmans Beach) and at the end fat Corringle Beach, near the mouth of the Snowy River. Walkers are likely to encounter numerous southern fur seals basking on the sand which will be extremely surprised to see a pack-toting human invading their domain.

Though it is a technically easy walk, with simple navigation (just follow the beach!) and no major hills to climb, the two or three days

of walking on sand that is alternately loose, then firm, can be suprisingly arduous. Your legis will get an intense workout even with boots on, and calf and quad muscles will be screaming for merry by the time you reach Corringle Beach. The walk can easily be done in reverse; however, the wind is often from the south and it is better to have this at your back if a storm blows in from Bass Strait. You can complete the walk in two long days. Three days will give you more time to complete the cars shuttle and allow plenty of swimming if the weather is warm.

When to go

East Gippsland is blessed with a milder winter than the rest of Victoria so autumn and winter can be great. Strong southerly fronts can blast out of Bass Strait at any time of year bring warm clothing and waterproof/breathable rain-wear regardless. The walk can be done at any time of year but bring plenty of protection from the scorching summer sun. The LV light reflects off the sand and ocean so good sunglasses, sunscreen and a hat are essential.

Safety

Scrub in this area harbours the paralysis tick; check thoroughly for these little terrors every evening. Brown snakes and tiger snakes may be found in the shady vegetation around sand-dunes and in the mire of Eving Marsh so take care when collecting fresh water. The ocean along Ninery Mile Beach is also pretty wild and rips and strong undertows are common; exercise caution while swimning. Water can be scarce in summer and during drought so take at least two days' worth of water with you to begin with, until you know that water

is available. It is recommended that water from Ewing Marsh be filtered (or at least chemically purified or boiled) before consumption.

Maps

The Natmap Orbost 1:100 000 topographic sheet covers most of the walk, with the Natmap Murrunggowar 1:100 000 sheet and the

The two or three days AT A GLANCE Grade Easy to moderate Length Two-three days Distance 42 kilometres

Distance 42 kilometres

Type Beach and vegetated dunes

Region East Gippsland coast, Victoria

Nearest towns Lake Tyers, Marlo

Start, finish Tyers House Track car park, mouth of the Snowy River (opposite Marlo township)

Maps Natmap Orbost
1:100 000, Natmap
Murrunggowar
1:100 000, Outdoor
Leisure Map Lake Tvers

1:25 000

Best time April—October, but can

season

Special points The beach faces south

and is exposed to strong winds from Bass Strait. The loose sand will make walkers' calves ache! Look out for ticks and snakes along the dunes and swamp.

be completed in any

Walkers head east along Ninety Mile Beach as gathering storms threaten. Greg Caire

Outdoor Leisure Map Lake Tyers 1:25 000 covering the rest.

Further reading

Peter Cook and Chris Dowd's small guidebook Wallibing the Wilderness Coast-Lakes Entrance to Pambula, published by Hill of Content, is an excellent resource, with walk descriptions covering the entire Wilderness Coast from Lake Tyers to Eden in New South Wales.

Permits

e walkers' calves

Look out for ticks
snakes along the
sand swamp.

Ewing Marsh Wildlife Reserve, in a conservation context this stretch of Ninesy
mits are required for walking at present and bush camping is

permitted. Access

Follow the Princess Highway to the Tyers House turn-off, approximately 12 kilometres east of Nowa Nowa, Follow the sandy Tyers

House Track for about 16 kilometres to the parking area at its end. The beautiful Ninety Mile Beach is signosted from here and is reached by a short walk through the well-established sand-dunes. To do the full two-three day bushwalk to Marto, a car shuttle of three hours is required; drive two or more vehicles to the parking area. This is the end of the bushwalk to Mark Victoria canning area. This is the end of the bushwalk on the western bank of the Snowy River estuary, Marlo township is on the eastern bank. Low a vehicle here and drive back to the start of the walk as outlined above.



Day one

From the parking area at the end of Tyers House Track, head south over the dunes to Ninety Mile Beach. A side trip (about four kilo metres return) to the mouth of Lake Tyers can be made; head right (west). This was an old Cobb & Co coach route in the 1800s; coaches crossed the sandy mouth of the lake at low tide. From the starting-point walk left (east) for approximately two hours to Pettmans Beach. Beyond the dunes is a vehicle-access point; you may see a fisherman or two. However, from here the beach is likely to be deserted until the end of the walk. There are pit toilest, camp-sites and a small water tank at Pettmans Beach. It is best to continue up the beach for another hour and seek a camp-site in the dunes to the north above the beach; there are taller trees here, which will give protection from the wind. Several flat camp-sites with room for three or four tents exist but you need to scout the dunes for suitable sites.

Day two

Descend the dunes to the beach and continue east (left). You are likely to encounter southern four seals basking on the sand just beyond the reach of the surf. Continue along the beach for about three hours. Keep an eye out for breaks in the line of dunes to your left. Cross the largest of these blow-outs, from the crest of the dune you will find yourself above Ewing Marsh, which extends for many kilometers on both sides. Descend the steep, northern face of the sand-dunes to the swampy, reed-filled marsh. You will probably find water. This is the only reliable water on the entire route so filter enough for the next two days. It is usually turbid and full of organic matter: let it settle in a spare billy or water bucket before trying to purify it or it will quickly block your filter! Observe the bird life here, or camp in the flat, vegetated area between dunes if your party desires a short day. You can head back over the dunes to the beach and walk east for a further hour to another blow-out that provides sheltered camping.



Ninety Mile Beach

Δ	5 10 km
Road	Vehicle track
Walking track ~	Route
Perennial swamp	Not for navigation. Use listed maps



The walk

The route follows a continuous stretch of Ninety Mile Beach roughly east and is entirely on sand. A line of high, vegetated sand-dunes is on your left for the entire length of the walk, providing protected camp-sites where sand blow-outs give access to flat ground. These dunes have established vegetation and are stabilised in places by trees, banksias and shrubs. A continuous swamp known as Ewing Marsh or Moras's backs these dunes to the north, forming an isolated, sandy isthmus that stretches for more than 40 kilometres. The swampy marsh usually provides drinking water (which must be filtered) but can dry up after extended drought. Ewing Marsh is bordered by thick eucalyst forest to the north, providing a habitat for wildlife including dingoes, kangaroos, wallabies, large lace mortors (goannas) and many birds. Take a fuel stove; don't burn the fallen banksias and eucalypt as they contribute organic matter to the thin, sandy solis.

Day three

Bass Strait

Head back to the beach from the dunes. Head left (east) again, making your way along Ninety Mile Beach. The vegetation bordering the dunes changes as you pass. Several blow-outs interrupt the continuous wall of dunes and make good lunch spots sheltered from the re-lentless wind. From camp, continue down the sand for about five houst until you reach a section of quite high, steep, vegetated dunes that mark the beginning of the Corringle Foreshore Reserve. This is just before the end of Ninety Mile Beach and the mouth of the Snowy River. On the opposite bank of the Snowy is the town of Marlo. Look for a track and small blow-out in the tall sand-hills: the shape and location of this varies with the time of year and wind direction. At the end of this track is your vehicle and the end of the walls.

Greg Carie has been pursuing outdoors activities since the late 1970s as his somewhat unflashionable outdoors colbing will attest. An interest in photography and the less developed regions spawned visits to remote and beaufful areas including Brazil, Bolivia, China, Peru, Pakistan and Tibet, and led to a foray into outdoors journalism that continues today.

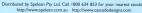


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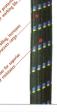


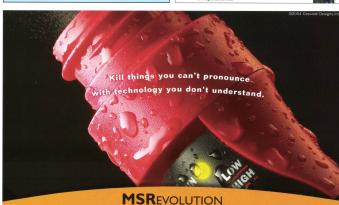






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TENTS for bushwalking

John Chapman helps you to find a home away from home

Wild Gear Surveys what they are and what they're not

The purpose of Wild Gear Surveys is to assist readers in purchasing specialist outdoors equipment of the quality and with the features most appropriate for their needs; and to save them time and money in the process.

The cost of objective and meaningful testing is beyond the means not only of Welfu, but of the Australian outdoors industry light but of the Australian outdoors industry lengeneral and we are not waver of such testing being regularly carried out by an outdoor magazine anywhere in the world. Similarly, given the number of products involved, field extent jo is beyond the means of Australia's categories of the control of the

Surveyors are selected for their knowledge of the subject and their impaniality. Surveys are checked and verified by an independent referee, and reviewed by Mild's editoral staff. Surveys are based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of the relevant issues' production; ranges and specifications may change later. Before publication each manufacturer/distributor is sent a summary of the surveyor's findings regarding the specifications of their products for verification.

Some aspects of surveys, such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgement on the part of the surveyor, the referee and Wild, space being a key consideration.

Value' is based primarily upon price relative to features and quality. A product with more elaborate or specialised features may be rated more highly by someone whose main concern is not price.

An important criterion for inclusion is wide availability. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops in the central busined districts of the major Australian cities. With the recent proliferation of brands and models, and the constant ebb and flow of their availability, wide availability is becoming an increasingly difficult concept to gin down.

Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartially, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedy from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and for the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.



A humble tent gives a window through to another world. Stephen Hamilton

FOR YEARS WALKERS HAVE HAD THE CHOICE between buying a tent made in Australia or New Zealand, or a cheaper product made in another country. However, the last local manufacturer, Macpac, has now moved all manufacturing off shore. Repair and warranty services remain locally but the effect has been that tents are now significantly cheaper. Prices are so reasonable that owning more than one for use in different circumstances is practical. As for the tents themselves, designs have not changed a lot in the last two years. Domes and domed hybrids are the most common designs as they give maximum interior volume for the weight. Most tents are now made from nylon, the traditional material. The brief interest in polyester has waned, with only a few models being made in both nylon and the

This survey concentrates on tents for general bushwalking and provides an idea of the range and types of tents that are available in the main outdoors shops in Australia at present.

Intended capacity

heavier polyester.

The number of people the tent is intended to accommodate as specified by the manufacturer.

The Marmot Swallow 2 dome tent.

Design/shape

The floor shape of most tents is rectangular, or learn textually designs have been classified according to the pole layout. A turnel CD has the opening on the narrow side (usually the head end) and traditionally the poles do not cross. A turnel/dome (TD) a hybrid of a turnel and a dome as it has the door at the head end but uses poles that cross and the entrance or entrances on the longer side of the inner tent. A tarp is basically just a fly-sheet, designed to be used with trekking- or ski poles.

Maximum internal dimensions

The largest measured size of the inner, length x width x height. Sizes are generally useful in comparing space; however, there are some



Tents for bushwalking Approx orice, \$ Bibler USA www.bible I-tent 2 TD 200 x 124 x 107 1.9 0-10 •• ... 0001/2 001/2 ٠ 215 x 152 x 107 Tempest TD 3.0 4 3-17 2 2 ee1/2 •• 0001/2 ... ٠ 1000 Ahwahnee 2 230 v 132 v 112 24 2+1 0_12 1190 Black Diamo 2 248 x 203 x 112 1.2 (1) 6-8 Poles are extra; optional floor Megamid 275 x 275 x 210 1.8 (2) 4-8 0001/2 001/2 •• As above 395 225 x 130 x 100 Cicada 4-14 001/2 -300 Moonshadow Due 260 x 146 x 118 3-9 **•**1/2 **•**1/2 **ee**1/2 ••• 2.1 2 001/ 320 Moonriver 2 217 x 136 x 115 001/2 -•• ••• 0001/ 330 Fl Canitan 2 D 232 x 140 x 120 2+1 0001/2 001/2 -450 Fairydown China v Escape 215 x 110 x 105 4-14 001/ 001/2 ---001/2 Assault 2 D 215 x 110 x 110 3,6 6-14 Kathmandu China v Northstar Plus 230 x 135 x 106 2.8 1-18 001/2 **ee**1/2 ee1/2 Summit Club member price 525 220 x 140 x 106 Mountain Plus TD 3.6 2-16 001/2 ee1/2 0001/2 ee1/2 . As above 615 Macpac Viet Nautilus т 212 x 145 x 98 29 2 4-12 2 ee!/2 ee!/ ee1/2 450 Apollo D 210 x 135 x 115 2-10 ee1/2 ... Edipse 228 x 117 x 110 2.3 10-16 ·1/2 001/ 500 Marm Edinse TD 220 x 95 x 95 2 2-12 001/2 •• -**a**1/2 ---400 Equinox 2 D 235 x 152 x 110 31 4-13 ... **ee**1/2 600

irregular designs where the maximum size is not typical of the tent.

244 x 146 x 105

Total weight

Swallow 2

Survey weights were specified by the manufacturer and should include everything for use when bushwalking. Variations in materials and ongoing manufacturing changes can cause weights to vary by 200-300 grams from those quoted. Some manufacturers quote 'minimum' or 'in-use' weights, which usually leave out things like pegs and carry bags. Ignore these lighter weights as most of the time you will need to carry the extras. Weight can sometimes be slightly reduced by replacing the supplied pegs with lighter models.

Number of poles

The first number shows how many fulllength poles there are that run from ground to ground. The second number (if there is one, after the +) shows the model's number of shorter poles. These poles usually hold up the top of the vestibule, improving ease of entry and storage volume. All tents surveved have aluminium shock-corded poles. Poles come in a variety of diameters; check carefully when purchasing spare or replace-

ment poles. Three tents don't have poles and are designed to be used with trekking poles or ski stocks.

The Black Diamond Meaamid is a tarp-style tent, sold without poles or a floor.

The minimum number of pegs needed are those required to put up the tent and fly in

windless conditions. The maximum number includes pegs for all peg- and storm-guy

750

Number of vestibules

--**e**1/2

The number of vestibule areas without a floor that can be used for gear storage. In all models the vestibules could be accessed from the inner tent.

Number of fly entrances

This column shows the number of external doors into the tent fly for each model. If ventilation is important for your needs consider tents with at least two doors on opposite ends for flow-through ventilation.

Roominess

I rated the inner of each tent for its length, width and height giving each a mark from half to one-and-a-half. I then added up the score and considered an adjustment of up to a point for roof and vestibule design as dimensions alone don't indicate the useful snace inside

Tents for bushwalking continued

			September 1988	Contract of the last											
	Intended capacity, people	Design/shape	Maximum internal dimensions, contimetres, length x width x height	Total weight, kilograms	No of poles	No of pegs, min-max	No of vestibules	No of fly entrances	Roominess	Ease of pitch	Stability	Access	Value	Comments	Approx price, \$
Mountain Design	s China w	ww.mou	intaindesigns.com												
Plateau	2	D	210 x 140 x 115	2.9	2	2-10	2	2	001/2	•••	•••	001/2	001/2		470
Neutrino Two	2	Т	220 x 130 x 105	1.7	2	4-8	1	1	••	••	••	ee 1/2	••	A Commence of the Commence of	500
Kaon	2	D	210 x 165 x 115	2.4	3	2-10	2	2	0001/2	•••	••	0001/2	00 1/2		650
MSR China www.r	nsrcorp.cor	n		3703											
Zoid 2	2	Т	250 x 140 x 100	2.1	2	8-11	1	1	ee 1/2	ee 1/2	••	001/2	001/2		530
Missing Link	2	Rect	330 x 150 x 110	1.6	(2)	7-9	1	1	0001/2	••	●1/ ₂	****		Poles are extra	560
Hubba Hubba	2	TD	220 x 130 x 110	2.1	3	1-7	2	2	ee 1/2	••	ee 1/2		***		600
Salewa Vietnam v	nunu caleura	com			2000	1000	97736								
Micra	1	D	210 x 120 x 105	2.3	2	2-10	1	1	●1/2	***	ee 1/2	001/2			330
Bergen II	2	D	220 x 140 x 103	2.9	2+2	4-12	2	2	000	001/2	***	001/2	0001/2		450
Sierra Leone II	2	D	230 x 155 x 110	3.6	2+1	4-16	2	2		001/2	0001/2	001/2	0001/2		570
				Contraction of the last of the	-	-	SECTION 1	NOT THE OWNER.	NO.	and the same of th	TO COLUMN TO	DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTY OF THE			
Sierra Designs C	_	_	-				88090		Manager Co.						350
Gamma	2	D	224 x 139 x 118	2.6	2+1	1-6	1	1	•••	000	00 1/2	0001/2	*****		350
Clip Flashlight	2	Т	226 x 147 x 109	2.1	2	6-13	1	1	●1/2	••	••	••	0000	1420	950
Hercules	2	TD	213 x 146 x 102	4.2	3	4-14	1	1	●● ¹ / ₂	••	****	00 1/2	•		930
Snowgum Vietna	m www.sno	wgum.	com.au												
Flash	2	T	235 x 142 x 105	2.4	2	4-10	2	2	••	•••	•• 1/2	••	****		350
Storm Shelter	2-3	D	210 x 145 x 117	2.8	2+1	4-14	2	2	•••	00 1/2	0001/2	ee 1/2	****		400
Caddis	2-3	Т	235 x 170 x 110	3.0	3	4-16	2	2	****	•••	•••	ee 1/2	0001/2		500
The North Face	China www	thenor	thface.com		27.2		10000								
Talus 23	2	D	230 x 136 x 117	3.1	3	2-12	2	2	0001/2			ee 1/2	●● ¹ / ₂		500
Roadrunner	2	D	220 x 122 x 106	2.9	2+1	2-16	2	2	001/2	0001/2	001/2	••	••		700
Wilderness Equip	ment Vie	tnam w	ww.wildequipmen	t.com.ai	u										
Dart	- 1	D	240 x 110 x 85	2.1	3	0	1	1	001/2	••	•••	••	•••		400
Second Arrow	2	Т	200 x 120 x 102	2.6	2	3-10	1	2	●¹/2	001/2	***	•••		Polyester version available	600
First Arrow	2-3	Т	220 x 155 x 120	3.3	3	3-12	2	3	0001/2	000	****	****	ee 1/2	Polyester version available	800

ee average eee good eeee excellent Design/shape: Dome with entrance on long side, Rectangular awning design, SH single hoop, TD dome or tunnel with crox short side, Tunnel with entrance on short side All Bibler tents and MSR Missing Link are single-skin tents, doors are inner only na not applicable † not seen by surveyor | not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are mode

Ease of pitch

Factors that affect this rating are whether a tent has continuous pole sleeves, the width of pole sleeves (some are very narrow!), pole lengths (different lengths can make it difficult to find the correct pole) and whether the poles cross (making it harder to erect).

Stability

This rates the overall stability of a tent against side forces. This rating is subjective as we could not test the tents in a wind tunnel. It is influenced by how I have seen designs perform and little features like attachments between the fly and inner, internal stiffeners and how well the panels are cut-they can make a big difference.

Access

I rated the tents on how easy it was to enter the tent and

The MSR Missing Link looks a bit different: note the use of trekking poles.

sit down. Tents with high or wide openings rate better than those with low or long entrances. Designs that expose the floor to rain when the tent door is opened are undesirable-I deducted up to a point for this.

Value

This is not simply a value-for-money rating. The price of the tent determined half the rating and the weight, roominess and entrance design were then considered equally. This rating was then compared with that of similar designs for the sake of consistency. The rating applies to tents for general bushwalking use from the tropics to extended walks throughout Australia. All tents surveyed are very good and a low rating does not mean a poor tent. The three models given

Other brands available

Some of these tents are available from less traditional shops such as camping or disposal shops and department stores.

Brand	Distribu	Contact				
Caribee		Clipper (02) International		9698 8944		

Coleman	Coleman Brands	1800 224 350
Doite	MB Wragg	(03) 9310 4696

Doite	MB Wragg	(03) 9310 4696
Exped	Aktiv8	(02) 9939 5611
GoLite	Sea to Summit	1800 787 677

Mountain Snowgum (03) 9543 9988 Hardware Roman

Roman

	Camping		
Vango	Ansco	(03) 9471	1500
Vaude	Rucsac Supplies	(02) 9546	8455

(02) 9516 5150



dehumidifier

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IACKO

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a one in this column are excellent for some uses but are expensive compared to other, less specialised tents.

Price

This is the recommended price including GST. Those who give preference to equipment made in Australia or New Zealand will be disappointed as all tents are now made overseas, with all local companies manufacturing off shore. This has generally reduced prices.

Buy right

The following are things to consider when buying a tent.

- Interior length: lie down and make sure the inner is long enough. Tents should be at least 20 centimetres longer than your height. If a sloping roof is close to your feet or head, add an extra ten centimetres.
- Interior height: is there enough room to change clothes without crushing other occupants? Sit up on your knees in the highest part of the tent to check
- Ventilation: there should ideally be two openings as high as possible. Many tents use the entrances-check that they stay open when wet and don't allow rain to fall directly on to the floor.
- Entrances: consider what the entrance will be like in poor weather when you try to remove a waterproof jacket as you get in. Tents that require crawling are best avoided.
- Separate pitching: only an insect screen is sometimes required in warm or humid climates. Is it possible to erect the inner and/or the outer on their own?

The Macpac Eclipse is a single-hoop



Availability

You will not find all the tents surveyed here available in any one shop, or even in every State. Most shops have only one to three brands and only some models on sale or display. This survey examines a maximum of three tents from each brand-many more may be available.

Bushwalking writer John Chapman has been contributing to Wild since issue one. His favourite place is Tasmania although he regularly visits all other Australian States.

This survey was refereed by Jim Graham

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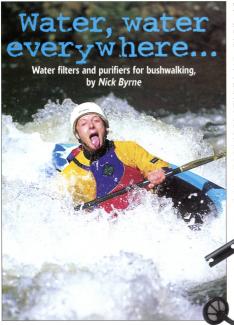












The lengths people go to for a good drink... Andy Wakefield on the Mersey River. Tasmania. Matthew Newton. Right, SweetWater Purifier System.

Wild Gear Surveys: What they are and what they're not (See box on page 63.)

ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING-WATER IS NECESsary when bushwalking. The state of your health can be the difference between a great trip and a hard slog on a bushwalk of any length. Until quite recently you could take water from mountain streams or watercourses in protected areas of Australia with relative confidence. The increasing number of bushwalkers, easier access to popular areas, poor personal hygiene and a lack of understanding of minimal-impact-bushwalking techniques have all contributed to water-quality problems in a number of Australia's bushwalking areas.

Water filters have traditionally been associated with trekking overseas. Their popularity in Australia has been growing as they provide outdoors enthusiasts with access to a quick and effective means of ensuring safe drinking-water. The range of options for improving water quality now includes water filters, purifiers, chemical treatments and mixed-oxidant electrolysis.

Since the last water filter survey in Wild no 87 Katadyn and MSR have acquired PUR and SweetWater, respectively. This has not directly affected the models available but the names have been changed. We have included more models from these brands in

the survey in order to give a more complete view of what is available.

This survey evaluates the suitability of a selection of water filters and purifying technologies for bushwalking use in Australia. All models surveyed are available at specialist outdoors shops throughout Australia.

Use

This is a survey of water filters for bushwalking, divided into four categories. Casual bushwalking (CB) is categorised as day walks and irregular overnight trips throughout the vear. For casual travel (CT), the main use will be while overseas or away from known cleanwater areas. Ideally, filters for this category are light, portable and easy to use. Devices that are durable, easy to maintain in the field and have a long cartridge life are suitable for frequent bushwalking (FB) assuming the filter is always on your gear check-list. The trekking (T) category assumes that the main use will be for overseas travel, where purification and durability are fundamental.

Weight

Weights were supplied by the manufacturers.

Unit type

While a vast range of products is available, different models are better suited for specific applications. All models surveyed are claimed to meet or exceed US Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) standards. That said, microfilters (M) will treat protozoa and bacteria, both of which have a gross-particle size that can be eliminated by pushing water through a structured matrix. Purifiers (P) will also remove viruses that are too small to be removed through filtration alone by combining filtration with a chemical process and/or electrolysis.

Preferred number of users

This measure compares the output, expected cartridge life and intended use of the unit.

What is in the water?

Viruses

The smallest and most dangerous, virus and can be as small as 0.004 microns. The common of the commo

Bacteria

Usually a result of poor camp hygiene and totalet practices, common bacteria include Campylobacter, Escherichia coli (E coli) and Salmonella. Bacteria also cause diseases such as cholera and legionnaires. Wash your hands and maintain hygien standards when out bush! Bacteria are medium-sized, ranging from 0.4 to one micron. The best way to treat bacteria in water is through filtration or chemical processes.

Protozoa

Best known for Giardia lamblia and Cryptosporidium parvum, protozoa are the largest pathogens in the treatable group, between two and 15 microns. While Cryptosporidium is found across the country, including in urban watersupplies, the increasing spread of giardia has been attributed to both international bushwalkers and returning trekkers spreading the cysts through dirty boots and tents. Protozoa are best treated by using a filter, or technology that incorporates electrolysis. Using chemical treatment is problematic as cysts can be resistant to both chlorine and jodine

It is a suggestion for an ideal share arrangement that is the most economical use for the model tested.

Pore size

This is a measure of the largest particle size able to pass through the filterdepending on the filter's structure this is either an absolute or nominal meassurement. Ceramic filters have an irregular structure so the pore size given is not precise, whereas glass fibre filters have pores of exactly the same size and an absolute figure can be given. Units are expressed in microns and have been supplied by the manufacturer.

Filter material

All filters work by pumping pressured water through a material matrix that separates particles from the water. Ceramic filters usually have smaller pore sizes and hence require greater pressure, which can result in lower flow-rates. They tend to be the easiest filters to clean as particles remain on the surface so that the cartridge can be scourred and particles removed repeatedly. Glass filter filters have a larger filter surface-area, allowing slightly better flow-rates. They are made of bundled strands of glass fibres and the cartridges are more difficult to clean. Structured-matrix filters combine filtration with molecular sieving and electro-kinetic attraction and so do not require the smallest pore size to treat water.

The MIOX model works like a small version of a town water-supply using new technology for bushwalking. This is not a filter but rather a chemical treatment combined with electrolysis that purifies water that is already visually clean. Using salt and untreated water to form a brine solution, a cocktail of mixed oxidants is formed by an electrical charge. The 'cocktail' is then added to larger volumes of untreated water neutralising bacteria, viruses and protozoa.

A number of filters include carbon activation. This removes the chemical tastes and odours usually associated with purification

Above, First Need Deluxe

purifier. **Left**, the MIOX Purifier works like a small version of a town watersupply.

treatment. While this is a useful addition, it is important to note that the life of the filter far exceeds the effectiveness of the carbon activation.

Rate of output

Water filters are complex pieces of equipment that are often used in adverse weather conditions that may

affect their performance. It is important to maintain your water filter to get the best performance from it. The rates of output listed assume a properly functioning water filter with clear water.

Cartridge capacity, litres

Extending the life of your filter and its cartridge relies on access to the cleanest source of water (see Tips for Users). The cartridge capacity is the manufacturer's recommendation and should be considered a maximum. Some filters are equipped with gauges that indicate the end of the effective life of a cartridge.

Durability

This is a rating of the weight of the unit 35 per cent) and strength of the material housing (35 per cent). It also considers the streamlined nature of the unit for packing (30 per cent). Other things taken into account were whether the pump handles protruded and were prone to additional pressure and whether the unit was lightweight plastic or also used stainless steel.

Tips for Users

- Cartridge life and output are directly related to how hard the cartridge has worked while treating the water. Manufacturers' estimates for cartridge life and tools such as gauges are useful measurements. When the cartridge needs replacing the unit will become more difficult to pump.
 - Filter water from the cleanest possible source, remembering that you extend the life and effectiveness of your filter by making it work more efficiently.
 - To extend the life of your filter, settle and prefilter. In a large container collect the cleanest water you can find and let the gross particles settle. Most units have a prefilter included that separates the larger particles, thus reducing the workload on the filter.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and storing your filter. If your unit has been lying dormant between uses replace the cartridge to ensure proper operation.
 - Avoid cross-contamination by separating the input hose and any containers used to gather contaminated water from the output hose or area of the filter. Dry bags work well for this.
 - If you are in a remote place carry spare parts and filter cartridges. Staying healthy increases the enjoyment of a trip.

Portability

The ability to carry your water filter easily and safely is measured in this rating. The size (25 per cent), shape (25 per cent), weight (35 per cent) and durability (15 per cent) of the unit when packed were considered.

Performance

Is the unit both a microfilter and purifier or does it provide long-lasting filtration for frequent bushwalking applications? All the units surveyed meet or exceed the US EPA standards. Therefore the evaluation of performance examines whether the unit performs well for its intended use in the areas of flow rate (25 per cent), cartridge life (50 per cent) and replacement cartridge cost (25 per cent).

Maintenance

This is a measure of how easy a model is to maintain in the field, based on the cartridge

Water filters and purifiers for bushwalking

	Dee	Weight, grams	Unit type	Preferred number of users	Pore size, microns	Filter material	Approx rate of output, litres a minute	Cartridge capacity, litres (maximum)	Cartridge replacement cost, \$	Durability	Portability	Performance	Maintenance	Value	Comments	Approx price, \$
General Ecology U	ISA www	.purific	rsaust	ralia.co	m.au											
Microlite	СВ, СТ	200	М	1	0.5 A	Structured matrix	1	100	35	••	000	•••	••	000	Includes iodine tablets for treatment; inexpensive	85
First Need Deluxe	СВ, СТ,	430	P	1-3	0.1 A	Structured matrix	125	500	110	••	••	•••		•••	Only filter that also purifies to EPA standard without chemical treatment	230
First Need Trav-L-Pure	CB, CT	625	P	3	0.1 A	Structured matrix	1.25	500	110	•••	••	•••	•••	•••	As above	350
Katadyn Switzerla	nd www.l	katadyı	n.com													
Exstream XR	СТ	250	P	1	na	Virustat, filtration, carbon	na	100	95	••	••••	••	•	••	Water-bottle with purification	100
Hiker (PUR)	CB, FB	310	М	2	0.3 A	Pleated glass-fibre	1	750	95				***		Simple; good flow rate	170
Combi	FB, T	580	М	3	0.2	Ceramic	1	50 000	200	•••	•••	•••	****	•••	Simple and effective design; easy to clean	340
Pocket	FB, T	550	М	2	0.2	Ceramic	1	50 000	330	••••	••••	••••	****	•••	Very durable and rugged in design	520
MSR USA www.ms	rcorp.co	m	1912		1976											
SweetWater Microfilter	СВ, СТ	320	м	2	0.2 A	Pleated glass-fibre	1.25	750	80	000	0000	000	•••	•••	Packs well; good flow rate	160
SweetWater Purifier System	СТ, Т	395	M/P	2	0.2 A	As above	1.25	750	80	•••	•••	***	•••	•••	As above	180
MiniWorks EX	FB, CT	455	М	2	0.2	Ceramic element, block-carbon core	1	2000	80	***	****	***	•••	••••	Good field maintenance and durability	180
WaterWorks EX*	FB, T	540	м	2	0.2 A	As above	1	2000	80; 120 with PES	•••	***	***	•••	•••	As above; additional filtration through PES membrane	330
MIOX Purifier	СТ, СВ	100	P	Any	na	na	na	200 #	40	***	****	•••	••••	•••	Lightweight; replacement salt packs come with	320

e poor se overage eee good eeee exceller. *User: CB casual bushwalking, CT casual travel, FB frequent bushwalking, T trekking. *Weights were supplied by the manufacturer. *Unit typer. *Microfiller, Purifier. *Poer sizer. Absolute poer sizer. *O' FE'S membrane provides scendingly inflavoral mate the carbon orang, single the file an absolute poer sizer. *O' A microfiller the material property and a property and a set of the country located when the manufacturer with in the products are model.

and prefilter cleaning and accessibility (40 per cent), availability of replacement kits (20 per cent), and the number of moving parts and O-rings that may fail or need routine maintenance (40 per cent).

Buy right

When purchasing a water filter your budget environment and frequency of the quency of water and the properties of the pr

- Research on the Internet and consult with shop staff.
- Consider how 'heavy' you are on your equipment—some products weigh more but are considerably more durable.
- The ergonomics of pumps are often overlooked by buyers. If possible test the models before purchase. Some models are more comfortable to use than others, particularly if used intensively over a relatively short period.
- Is the unit easily maintained? This includes ready access to spare parts and replacement cartridges.

Value

This subjective rating places equal value upon the durability, portability, performance and maintenance of each model in relation to the recommended retail price.

Other options

Mixed-oxidant technology

is a process of combining electrolysis with a sodium-chloride solution and has been used for treating urban water-supplies for decades. Patented by the MIOX corporation and initially developed for the US military, this technology is now available through specialist outdoors shoos. Mixed oxidant technology shoos Mixed oxidant technology shoos Mixed oxidant technology shoos Mixed oxidant technology.

nology combines salt, water and electricity to provide a water-purification system; however, the water is not filtered. The heart of the technology is the MIOX cell that generates the mixed-oxidant solution through electrically charging the mixture of water and salt.

While not suitable for use as a device that 'filters' water, the use of mixed-oxidant technology provides a lightweight, field-stable chlorine treatment that exceeds the US EPA standard for water purifiers, effectively treating viruses, bacteria and protozo.

The simple design of the Katadyn Combi.

Similar in application to the MIOX, the Steri-Pen is a small, portable purifier that uses a charge of UV light to kill water-borne microbes. As with the MIOX, it requires a visually clean water-source and relies on hateries

water-quality test kit

water-source and relies on batteries.

It costs \$499 and is distributed
by Rucsac Supplies, Phone (02)

9546 8455.

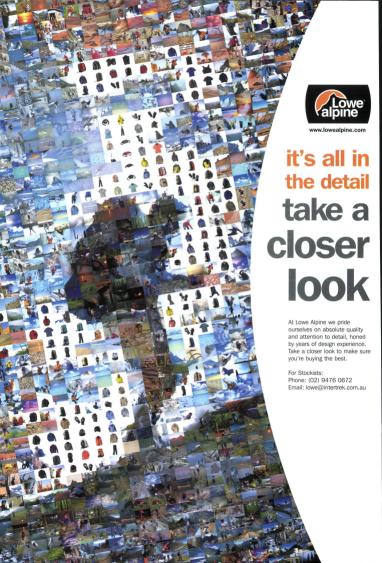
Chemical purification is an alternative treatment: usually

an alternative treatment; usually iodine or chlorine is used. This is not the most stable form of treatment and, being dependent on environmental parameters such as temperature and contact time, may not always be effective. It normally also

leaves an after-taste in the water. The most common products are Coghlan's Drinking Water Treatment (using iodine) and Micropur Forte tablets that use silver and calcium hypochlorite. Both products cost around \$30 and are widely stocked.

Nick Byrne has settled in northern Tasmania after a number of years skiing, walking and riding throughout the mainland and overseas. The combination of short road trips and access to clean water has had the result that he now calls Tassie home.

This survey was refereed by Richard King.



The world's lightest clothing?

Montane—a UK-based outdoors clothing company known for its lightweight ing company known for its lightweight shell fabrics are used extensively throughout the range, combined with the descriptively named 'Cross-Vent System' which is claimed to allow air flow directly which is claimed to allow air flow directly to the ampit and chest areas giving good temperature control. Products include the Featherlight 'Smock'—aponemity 'the brand is billed as 'the world's lightest outdoor clothing'; phone **Wildside Design** on (03) 5282 5654 for further information. RRP for the Featherlight and 180 Smock \$129 and \$289, respectively.

Never one to rest on its laurels, Macpac has been busy tinkering around with its clothing range. The Protégé jacket is a new insulation-layer jacket made from fleece bonded with a windproof, breathable coating. Apparently it has a durable waterproof treatment on the face fabric, a full-length zip, two zipped hand pockets and shoulder and

chafe when worn with a pack.
Other garments in the range
have been redesigned. Visit
www.macpac.co.nz for more
information. The Protégé has
a RRP of \$249.

side seams placed so that they don't

Left, the Montane Featherlight is aptly named. Below, Macpac's Protégé

iacket.

original ultra-lightweight weather shirt at a claimed weight of 85 grams, and the 180 Smock which, you guessed it, weighs 180 grams. Other products available in Australia include waterproof trousers and jackets, as well as shorts and T-shirts. The

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Judging by the sheer numbers of nev headtorches entering the market every year, it seems as though more effort is put into producing brandspanking light designs than promoting world peace! Black Diamond's two new 'smart' headlamps the Zenix IO and the Vectra IO both have current control that is claimed to ensure a constant light throughout the life of the battery, while a battery monitor lets you know when you're ninning low. Dimming switches apparently allow a choice to be made between output and battery life, and a tiny blinking LED light should make the torch easier to find. The Zenix IO is said to use a new generation LED which throws a 35 metre beam, along with two standard LEDs, while the Vectra IQ is a xenon/LED hybrid that has a beam of up to 150 metres or battery life of up to 160 hours. Contact Sea to Summit for further information: phone 1800 787 677, RRP for the Zenix IO and Vectra IO \$109 and \$119, respectively.

Complete with a 'boost button', this headtorch may well be rocket science.

(FID. ... - - F

Petzl has also been busy developing its own super-duper light. The MYO XP headtorch apparently has a super-bright LED with both a longrange, intense beam (which lights up to 45 metres and has a run time of 70 hours on the maximum mode) and a diffuse, wide-angle option for closer range. There are said to be two other lighting levels as well, offering a maximum battery life of 170 hours. At the touch of the 'boost button'. the torch can produce 50 per cent more light-who says it's not rocket science! It also has a lockable power switch and an indicator that shows battery life. Distributed by Spelean. RRP \$139. Phone 1800 634 853 for more information.

TRADE NEWS

Anaconda, a new 'adventure superstore' opened in Melbourne in December, with plans to open six stores a year in each State and Territor, Billing isself as 'the ultimate adventure playground' the shop has a climbing pinnacle, a campire and a fish tank complete with Gawin the barramundi. More than 28 000 outdoors products are claimed to be available, from military clothing and four-wheel-drive accessories to climbing gear, sold by 82 'expert' staff. However, with a product range that big it may be hard to have an 'expert' on hand at every opportunity. Visit www.anaconda.com.au for further details. In other trade news, the 21 shops and wholesale business that form Snow-gum in Australasia were sold by Scouts Australas's Victorian branch to a

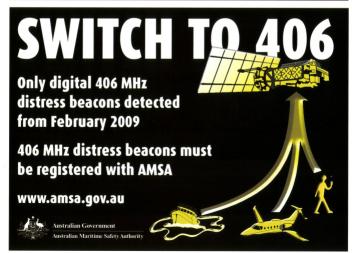
In other trade news, the 21 shops and wholesale business that form Snowgum in Australasia were sold by Scouts Australia's Victorian branch to a consortium headed by businessman Ross Elliott. Elliott commented that 'today's growth market is more about fashion with a technology edge—high performance at an affordable price. Elliott also said that the company wann't leaving its traditional outdoors market behind. There are plans to open 20 new Snowgum shops during the next three years.

The world's lightest outdoor clothing is now available in Australia



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trix

A tea cosu for your head

An ingenious stand-in for a hat by Stephen Hamilton

If you've forgotten to pack your warm hat or if your only hat gets wet try folding up a thermal top (a light sunthetic one is best) into a square shape that is big enough to cover your head and ears. Use your headtorch strap to hold it on and adjust the excess material so that it is tucked and folded up neatly. You now have a very effective, dry and warm makeshift hat! I've found this method extremely worth while when my only hat is too damp to wear to bed without the risk of my sleeping-bag hood becoming damp. I then hang my damp hat up on the internal clothes-line in the tent and allow it to dry naturally during the night.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section: payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.

Knick-Knacks

Bedbugs be gone

Sea to Summit's new sleeping-bag liners are treated with Permethrin, an insecticide that is said to be naturally derived and odourless. The insect protection is claimed to last for several wash cycles. Silk and cotton liners are available, both with built-in pillowslips, RRP \$89 and \$39, respectively.

Eat your way light

We've recently been directed to a Web site that, if it is bona fide (which we doubt!), certainly fulfils the criteria of 'new and innovative'. Eastern Active Technologies (EAT) claims to be 'North America's leading manufacturer of consumable outdoor gear', with products such as edible sleeping-mats (California Rolls) and rucksacks (SnackPack I and II) that make 'your last mile your lightest mile'. Imagine slipping into your SnackSack sleeping-bag at the end of a hard day in the bush and tearing a strip from the blueberryand-vanilla flavoured exterior. Or better yet, having a few mouthfuls for a leisurely breakfast in bed...EAT has imagination, if nothing else! Visit www.ediblegear.com for further details, and a chuckle at the 'Newsbites' section.

New and innovative products of relevance to the rucksack sports (on loan to Wild) and/or information about them, including high-resolution digital photos (on CD, not by email) or colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or contact us by email: editorialadmin@wild.com.au

The Therm-a-Rest® Fast & Light Advantage

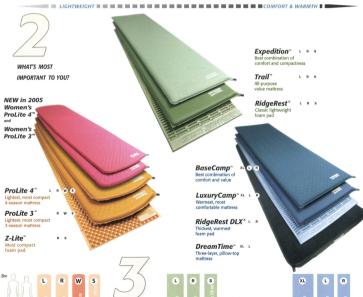
We've made the world's lightest, most compact mattresses with innovative new foam and fabrics to reduce weight by up to 25%, with optimal die-cutting and tapered mattress shapes to allow for smallest roll size ever and our grip-dot bottom keeps mattresses from slipping for 2005 we've added new women's mattresses, available in ProLite 3¹⁸ and ProLite 4¹⁸ models, specially designed in response to women's most frequent requests. They're warmer, lighter, and more compact than our men's mattresses, with a unique shape that better fifts women's badier.



HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR







CHOOSE YOUR SIZE.

GUNNS <mark>Sues</mark> conservationists

Wood-chip giant claims multimillion dollar damages



Supporters of the Gunns 20 held a silent viail in Hobart in December: people protested by shaking their keys. Michael Thomsen

On 14 December Tasmanian wood-chip giant Gunns Ltd lodged writs against environmentalists for a total of \$6.36 million in damages, claiming they conspired to 'unlawfully interfere with its business and engaged in "corporate vilification". The writ seeks compensation from 17 individuals, including five emplovees of The Wilderness Society and Greens leader Bob Brown, and three groups including TWS. TWS and its staff are accused of organising the campaign and face a total claim of \$3.5 million. In the Age Senator Brown was quoted as saying, 'It is a US-style writ to hector the strongholds of the popular environment movement into silence and submission'. The 'Gunns 20' intend to fight the writ.

The damages claim has drawn widespread attention in both the national and international media. Protest rallies were held across the country, with more than 600 people attending a demonstration in Hobart on 15 December. For further information visit www. mcgunns.com

Act now

Donations for the Gunns 20 collective fighting fund can be made through TWS or any Greens shop. Visit www. wilderness.org.au for further details.



Kosciuszko Plan of (mis)Management

Andrew Cox reports on the final draft

The new Plan of Management (PoM) for Kosciuszko National Park will soon be finalised. setting the direction for the park's management for the next 20 years. The new plan is due to be signed by the Minister for the Environment as early as March.



Site of the proposed expansion of Perisher Village that would turn this cluster of ski lodges into a small town with swimming-pool. cinemas and shops. Andrew Cox

Conservation groups hoped that the plan would reduce damaging impacts; instead it appears that the main threats to the park's natural values will be entrenched or expanded. The government also recently decided to permit a five-year cloud-seeding trial in the park without a proper environmental assessment, and excised roads in the park leading to the main ski resorts.

Horse-riding throughout half of Kosciuszko National Park will be expanded, with the number of exclusive horse camps to double to fourteen, and horse-riding in sensitive localities such as the karst areas at Cooleman Plain will continue. The plan does not deliver adequate resources for preventing the spread of feral horses throughout the park, or controlling other feral animals and weeds.

The PoM dodges the question of whether there will be any ski industry in the park in the future despite the prediction that snow cover will shrink by between ten and 40 per cent in the next 20 years. The plan's response is to permit an additional 1300 beds at Perisher and encourage year-round use of all resorts in the park instead of encouraging accommodation in neighbouring established towns. For more information, go to www.npansw.

org.au/kosciuszko

RECENT WILDERNESS WINS AND LOSSES

Land conservation, court cases and logging

The South Australian Government recently announced a proposal to protect 500 000 hectares of the Yellabinna wilderness in a Wilderness Protection Area, as reported by The Wilderness Protection Area, as reported by The Wilderness Society, Yellabinna is north of the Great Australian Bight in SA and makes the Wilderness Voicety of the Great Victoria Desert. However, around 14 mining exploration licences will also be granted in the area. The public consultation period for the proposal ended in lanuary 2005.

Andrew Cox reports that late last year the New South Wales Government announced the conversion of 7000 hectares of State forest on the south coast to National Parks or State Conservation Areas. Included are the only unprotected area of the upper Deua River catchment, all of the remaining Monga State Forest and an addition to the Murramarang National Park that will protect 'Old Blotchy,' a massive spotted gum believed to be more than 500 years old.

The addition of the small area with the old giant completes a twenty-year campaign by conservation groups to protect all State forests east of the Princes Highway between Ulladulla and Batemans Bay. Unfortunately, much larger areas of old-growth and high conservation forest to the west that were expected to be protected.

that were expected to be protected, such as Badja State Forest, weren't included. NSW environment groups are concerned about details of the new draft land-clearing legislation released in November. TWS reports that land clearing will not be prevented



Old Blotchy, a 500-year-old spotted gum, is now protected in a National Park. Andrew Cox

unless the draft regulations are tightened, as loopholes and complicated exemptions could allow broad-scale land clearing to continue. New laws to stop land clearing were passed almost eighteen months ago but have vet to be put into action.

A landholder who illegally cleared a Ramsar-listed wetland in north-western NSW was recently fined \$150,000 with his company required to pay a further \$300 000. Additional rehabilitation requirements include compulsory tree planting and the exclusion of stock on the cleared land. In another similar case, bushwalkers in Queensland's Main Range National Park noticed that a remote area had been cleared for grazing and reported it to the Environmental Protection Agency. According to the FPA in December a Queensland man was found guilty of clearing more than 13 hectares of the land near Killarney south-west of Brisbane. The defendant was fined \$10,000 and ordered to give up 436 hectares of his land to become part of the National Park

In Tasmania it is not just the Styx. Valley and Tarkine that are under threat. Many areas in the northeast of the State are threatened with logging in the near future. The Blue Tier, an area of wild forest near St Helens, is scheduled to be clear-felled soon despite years of community opposition, and there are coupes due to be logged at the Bay of Fires and the South Sister near St Manys. It is claimed that water catchments face possible containnaintain if these op-

erations proceed. For further details about these campaigns, visit www.bluetier.org and www.southsister.org

For further information on any of these important topics, visit www.wilderness. org.au

Emissions and omissions

Hazelwood power station loses legal case

In an Australian legal first, a recent tribunal case involving Hazelwood, Australia's most greenhouse polluting power station, has found that the greenhouse pollution of the power station must be considered as part of the planning process. Environment Victoria reports that this is a powerful legal precedent for considering greenhouse pollution in the planning process. International Power, the company that owns Hazelwood, had applied to the Victorian Covernment to expand its brown coal mine, allowing the power station to continue operating until 2027. The original Environmental Effects Statement for this proposal did not consider the greenhouse gas emissions of Hazelwood as Mary Delahunty, the Minister for Planning at the time, had instructed the panel to overlook the emissions.

It is not clear whether International Power will appeal the decision. It is expected to be very difficult for the company to justify the release of the amount of pollution that the expansion of the coalmine and subsequent energy generation would release.

In other greenhouse news, the Kyoto Procolo was due to become international law on 16 reforanzy 2005 without Australia as a signatory. In the absence of a federal policy to cap and trade emissions, the States are still investigating the potential for a rational carbon-trading mechanism. The Victorian Government is strongly behind such a scheme. However, in an expected response, industrial groups in the State have warned of massive job losses if the proposed emissions trading scheme becomes a reality.

Let 'em flow, let 'em flow, let 'em flow

River health around the nation



The Gulf of Carpentaria's Smithburne River contains major migration staging sites. It is a tributary of the Gilbert River, one of the many rivers not protected in the proposed 'Wild Rivers Act'. Wayne Lawler

A leaked report from the Murray Darling Basin Commission in November 2004 showed that in the previous 18 months the number of river red gums counted as stressed, dving or dead on the Murray had risen by a quarter to 75 per cent. According to Environment Victoria in issue 211 of the EV News. this follows studies showing that: up to half of the Murray's native freshwater fish species are threatened with extinction: in almost all the Murray Basin's rivers salt levels are rising; and since 1901 the average annual flow to the sea through the Murray mouth has been reduced by around 80 per cent.

The commitment by governments to give an annual increased flow rate of 500 billion litres to the Murray by 2006 may well be too little too late, especially as this is only one-third the amount of water that scientists believe the river system needs to survive.

The Colong Bulletin no 207 reports that a plan by BHP-Billiton to establish a four-and-a-half kilometre long-wall coalmine under the Nepean River in NSW is likely to cause poisoning of the river for up to seven years, and lead to substantial loss of flow. Similar mining under the

Cataract River began in 1988 and by 1994 hundreds of cracks had appeared in the riverbed, some acting as vents for Inflammable gas. The river lost is tis water flow; even now BHP daily sends 2.5 mega-littes of water down the river to counter the water loss. There are several other rivers that have been severely damaged by similar mines. BHP-Billion has been asked to prepare an environmental impact statement; however, previous EIS reports for the company haven't recommended any mining-subsidence protection zones for riverbeds.

On a positive note, in 2004 the Queensland Covernment announced its intention to create a Wild Rivers Act to protect some of the State's remaining wild river systems. This would prohibit activities such on dam building and land clearing around these waterways. The Wildermess Society claims that there are 60 river systems that retain wild river status; however, as it stands, the proposed Act would protect only 19 of these. Thy's believe that the legislation is a very good start but further work is needed.

For further information about the Wild Rivers Act, visit www.wildrivers.org.au

Wood-chips

Grazing increases blazing

Eli Greig reports that a long-awaited report into cattle grazing in the Victorian Alps and its effects upon fire suppression has been released. The report appears to contradict the theory that 'grazing reduces blazing' (supported by mountain cattlemen) by noting that cattle generally eat the fire-suppressing flora, avoiding bushes with high oil-levels, which then colonise the area when the cattle move on. The report notes that the critical issue is the type of vegetation around rather than whether it has been grazed. Both this report and the State Government Esplin Inquiry into the 2003 alpine bushfires conclude that the current grazing regime has no positive impact on fire control

Nuclear news

Leading environment groups have joined residents and the NSW Government in calling for the rejection of an application to operate a new nuclear reactor in Sydney. The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) has applied for a licence to run a new reactor, being built at present at the Lucas Heights nuclear facility in southern Sydney, Critics of the reactor plan point to unresolved safety, security and waste issues, with the key hurdle the management of nuclear waste. However, it was reported in the Australian on 21 January that spent fuel rods from the proposed reactor would be accepted by the US for the next ten years, a move condemned by the Australian Conservation Foundation as a quick fix. Public submissions on the reactor license can be made until 29 April 2005: for further details, go to www.arpansa.gov.au/rrrp operating.htm

Activist rights?

Melbourne's Fitzroy Legal Service has launched a new Web site designed to help activists to find accurate and up-to-date information about their rights and other legal issues. It can be found at www.activistrights.org.au

Mobile recycling

It is estimated that there are between ten and 18 million unused mobile phones in Australia, most of which will end up as landfill. The Spastic Centre is supplying free post satchels for mobile phones, which it will then recycle. Go to www. mobilephonerecycling.com.au to order a satchel.

Readers' contributions to this department, including highresolution digital photos or colour slides, are welcome. Items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send them to 1/6/67, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au





WALK THROUGH LADAKH

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FITNESS

This event is open to anyone of reasonable fitness, provided that you are willing to train prior to the trip. The MS Society retains the right to exclude any individual who does not have a sufficient level of fitness to take part in the tour. Some of the distances are quite long and we will be encountering a number or built on the rehaltonse.

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www.mschallenge.com.au



Blue Mountains World Heritage

by Alex Colley and Henry Gold (Colong Foundation for Wilderness, 2004, RRP

This is a magnificent book. A great collection of the best of Henry Gold's photos of the greater Blue Mountains illustrate an inter-



esting text that is largely written by Alex Colley

It is inspirational to open the book and note that Colley was born in 1909. He has been an active bushwalker since the 1930s

FEDERATION

and joined the Colong Committee (as it was then called) when it was formed in 1968 to save the Colong Caves from limestone mining. To this day Colley is still an active volunteer for the Colong Foundation. His text details not only the battle for Colong Caves but also the fight to stop the logging of the Boyd Plateau and the damming of the Colo River. These were all important conservation issues

where success was not certain. It was only due to the tireless efforts of people such as the authors and Milo Dunphy that these hattles were won

One of the key weapons in these campaigns were Henry Gold's photos. Special books of them were prepared for submissions or given to politicians. Many of these photos are reproduced in the book. Gold's photographs are works of art. His lovingly crafted black-and-white photos are particularly strik-

This book is highly recommended. David Noble

Freycinet National Park, Tasmania

by Rob Blakers (Wilderness Photo, 2004. RRP \$39.95).

This beautifully presented coffee-table book is a celebration of Freycinet, a National Park referred to as 'one of the finest of its size in

Australia, if not the world'. Even a cursory flick through Rob Blakers's book lends credence to this claim. Wild readers are already familiar with Blakers's work (see Folios in Wild nos 91, 82, 57 and 41) and his photos are of their usual high quality. The delicate details and expansive vistas of the peninsula are captured, as are its moods and inhabit-

ants: there is much more to this park than Wineglass Bay. Jamie Kirkpatrick provides an informative, interesting and wellwritten text explaining the history and natural heritage of Tasmania's second most popular National Park.

Federation Australia's

by Kevin Doran (Desdichado Publish-

A personal account of the author's 30-year

love affair with Federation Peak, the text

details his 23 attempts at the peak, of which

16 were successful. The most interesting are

three tough winter trips done

more than 20 years ago. The

book also includes a brief his-

tory of the peak which is some-

what lacking as it is primarily a

summary of articles from

Tasmanian Tramp (the Hobart

Walking Club's magazine) and

leaves out some significant

ascents. Overall, an interesting

read for those who have

Adventure Peak

ing, 2004, RRP \$16.50).

Megan Holbeck



Walking on the Wilder Side...In the Conondales

by Cheryl Seabrook and others (Conondale Range Committee, 2004, RRP \$17, www.exploreconondales.com).

> The Conondales are a wilderness area in the Sunshine Coast hinter land, near Kenilworth, not widely known outside the region. You may deduce from the title that this is a walking guidebook but it is more than that. Many good walking routes are suggested but there are also

notes on mountain biking, camping, vehicle touring and local history.

The flora and fauna sections are informative, easy to read and illustrated with quality sketches and photographs. The content reflects the passion of members of the Conondale Range Committee, many of whom have been working to save the Conondales

since the 1960s An excellent guide to a remarkable region. John Daly



Discovering Grampians-Gariwerd

by Alistair and Bruce Paton (Victorian National Parks Association, 2004, RRP \$1995)

The subtitle 'A visitor's guide to Grampians National Park' sums up both the book's purpose and its contents. This small paperback is an informative guide, covering the history, geography and flora and fauna of the Grampians, as well as scenic drives



and walks in the area. It is

well laid out and user-friendly It would be an useful book for visitors to the Grampians (especially those from overseas) or people unfamiliar with the region. MH

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them with a digital image of the cover for reproduction, and RRP, to Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

visited Federation John Chapman From Fraser's to Freezeout

by Ian Stapleton (published by the author, 2004, RRP \$35 and p&p (\$8 Vic. \$10 NSWI from the author, Feathertop Tk. Harrietville Vic 3741).

Like Stapleton's first book on the pioneers of the Mt Hotham area, Hairy-Chested History, his latest tome introduces us to many

intriguing characters who helped to develop the isolated area of the Victorian Alps between Mt Hotham and Dargo, including the Dargo High Plains and the nearby gold-fields. From Fraser's to Freezeout contains loads of historical photographs as well as numerous quotes from the old-timers themselves. If vou've an interest in the history of the High Country. you'll enjoy this book.

Glenn van der Kniift





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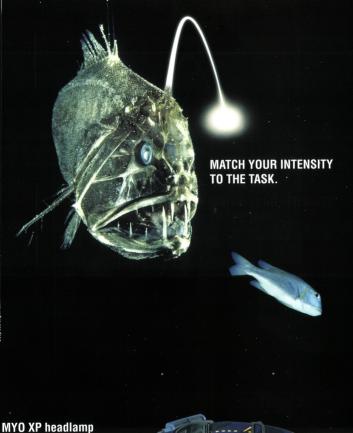












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